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CORINNA;

OR,

ITALY.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CORINNA;

OR,

ITALY.

BY MAD. DE STAËL HOLSTEIN.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY D. LAWLER.

Udrallo il bel paese,
Ch' Apennin parte, e'l mar circonda, et l'Alpe,
PETRARCH.

VOL. III.

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CORINNA.

BOOK. IX.

CHAP. II.

OSWALD, since his calamity, had not found spirits to seek the pleasure of music. He dreaded those ravishing strains so soothing to melancholy; but which inflict real pain, when oppressed by real grief. Music awakens those bitter recollections, which we are desirous to appease. When Corinna sang, Oswald listened to the words which she uttered; he contemplated the expression of her countenance; it was she alone that occupied him; but if in the streets, of an evening, several voices were

joined, as it frequently happens in Italy, to sing the fine airs of the great masters, he, at first, endeavoured to listen, and then retired, because the emotion it excited, at once so exquisite and so indefinite, renewed his pain. However, there was a magnificent concert to be given in the theatre at Rome, which was to combine the talents of all the first singers. Corinna engaged Lord Nelville to accompany her to this concert, who consented, expecting that his feelings would be softened and refined, by the presence of her he loved.

On entering her box, Corinna was immediately recognised, and the remembrance of the Capitol adding to the interest which she usually inspired, the theatre resounded with applauses. From every part of the house they cried, "*Long live Corinna!*" and the musicians themselves, electrified by this general emotion, began to play victorious strains; for men are led

CORINNA.

to assimilate triumph of every sort with war and battle. Corinna was intimately affected with these universal tokens of admiration and respect. The music, the applauses, the *bravos*, and that indefinite impression, which a multitude of people, impressing one sentiment, always produces, awakened those feelings which, in spite of her efforts to conceal them, appeared in her eyes, suffused with tears, and the pal-pitation of her heart equally visible. Oswald, jealous of this emotion, approached her, saying, in a low voice,—“It would be a pity, madam, to snatch you from this brilliant popularity, it is certainly equal to love, since it produces the same effect in your heart.”—Having spoken thus, he retired to the further end of the box, without waiting for any reply. These words produced the most cruel agitation in the bosom of Corinna, and in a moment destroyed all the pleasure she received from these testi-

timonials of applause, which principally gave her delight, because they were witnessed by Oswald.

The concert began—he who has not heard Italian singing can have no idea of music! Italian voices are so soft and dulcet, that they recal at once the perfume of the flowers, and the purity of the sky. The music is suited to the climate: one is like a reflection of the other. The world is the work of one mind, expressed in a thousand different forms. The Italians, during a series of ages, have been enthusiastically fond of music. Dante, in his poem of purgatory, meets with one of the best singers of his age; he produces, by solicitation, one of his delicious airs, and the ravished spirits are lulled into oblivion of their sufferings, until recalled by their guardian angel. The christians, as well as the pagans, have extended the empire of music beyond the grave. Of all the fine arts,

it is that which produces the most intimate impression upon the soul. The others are directed to some particular idea ; but this appeals to the immediate source of our existence, and entirely changes our internal habit. What is said of Divine Grace, which suddenly transforms the heart, may be applied, humanly speaking, to the power of melody ; and among the presentiments of the life to come, those which spring from music are not to be despised.

Even the gaiety, which the comic music of Italy is so well calculated to excite, is not of that vulgar description which does not speak to the imagination. At the very bottom of the mirth, which it excites, will be found poetical sensations, and an agreeable reverie, which mere verbal pleasantry never could inspire. Music is so fleeting a pleasure, that it glides away almost at the same time we feel it, in such a manner, that a melancholy impres-

sion is mingled with the gaiety, which it excites. But it also, when expressive of grief, gives birth to a sweet sentiment. It makes the pulses of the heart beat with more rapid motion; and the satisfaction caused by the regularity of the measure, in reminding us of the brevity of time, points out the necessity of enjoying it. You no longer feel any vacuum, any silence around you; life is filled; the blood flows quickly, and you feel within you that motion which gives activity to life.

Music redoubles the ideas which we possess, and the faculties of the soul; when listening to it, we feel capable of the noblest efforts. Animated by music, we march to the field of death with enthusiasm. This divine science is happily incapable of expressing any base sentiment, any artifice, any falsehood. Calamity itself, in the language of music, is stript of

its bitterness ; it neither irritates the mind, nor rends the heart. Music gently raises that weight which almost constantly oppresses the heart, when we are formed for deep and serious affections ; that weight which sometimes becomes confounded with the very sense of our existence ; so habitual is the pain which it causes. It seems to us, in listening to pure and delectable sounds, that we are about to seize the secret of the Creator, and penetrate the mystery of life. No language can express this impression, for language follows primitive ideas at a distance, as prose-translators walk in the steps of the poets. It is only the look that can give some idea of it ; the look of an object you love long fixed upon you, and so penetrating, by degrees, into your heart, that you are at length obliged to cast down your eyes, in order to shrink from its searching rays, which, like the beams of another existence, would con-

sume the mortal being who should presume stedfastly to contemplate them.

The admirable exactness of two voices, perfectly in harmony, produces, in the duets of the great Italian masters, a melting delight, which cannot be prolonged without pain : It is a state of pleasure too exquisite for human nature ; and the soul then vibrates like an instrument, which too perfect an harmony would break. Oswald had obstinately kept at a distance from Corinna during the first part of the concert ; but when the duet began, almost in a half-voice, accompanied by wind instruments, whose sounds were more pure than the voice itself, Corinna covered her face with her handkerchief, entirely absorbed in emotion ; she wept, but without suffering—she loved, and was undisturbed by any fear. Undoubtedly, the image of Oswald was present to her heart ; but this image was mingled with the most noble enthusiasm, and a

rowd of confused thoughts wandered over her soul, which it was necessary to limit, in order to render them distinct. It is said that a prophet traversed seven different regions of heaven in a minute. He who could thus conceive all that an instant might contain, must surely have felt the sublime power of music, by the side of the object he loved. Oswald felt this power, and his resentment became gradually appeased. The feelings of Corinna explained and justified every thing ; he gently approached her, and Corinna heard him breathing by her side in the most enchanting passage of this celestial music—it was too much—the most pathetic tragedy could not have excited in her heart so much sensation as this intimate sentiment of profound emotion, which penetrated them both at the same time, and which each succeeding moment, each new sound, continually increased. The words of the song have no concern in pro-

ducing this effect—they may, indeed, occasionally excite some partial reflection on love or death; but it is the indefinite charm of music which blends itself with every feeling of the soul; and each one thinks he finds in this melody, as in the pure and tranquil star of night, the image of what he wishes for on earth.

“Let us retire,” said Corinna; “I feel ready to faint.” “What ails you?” said Oswald, with uneasiness; “you grow pale. Come into the air with me; come.” They went out together. Corinna, leaning on the arm of Oswald, felt her strength revive, from the consciousness of his support. They both approached a balcony, and Corinna, with lively emotion, said to her lover, “Dear Oswald, I am about to leave you for eight days.” “What do you tell me?” interrupted he. “Every year,” replied she, “at the approach of Holy Week, I go to pass some time in a convent, to prepare

myself for the solemnity of Easter." Oswald advanced nothing in opposition to this intention ; he knew that at this epoch, the greater part of the Roman ladies give themselves up to the most rigid devotion, without being, on that account, more religious during the rest of the year ; but he recollected that Corinna professed a different worship to his, and that they could not pray together. "Why are you not," cried he, "of the same religion as myself?" Having pronounced this wish, he stopped short. "Are not our hearts and minds natives of the same country?" answered Corinna. "It is true," replied Oswald ; "but I do not feel, less painfully, all that separates us." They were then joined by Corinna's friends ; but this eight days' absence produced such an effect upon him, that he did not utter a word the whole evening after.

CHAP. III.

OSWALD visited Corinna at an early hour, uneasy at what she had said to him. He was received by her *femme de chambre*, who gave him a note from her mistress, informing him that she had entered the convent on that same morning, agreeably to the intention of which he had been apprised by her, and that she should not be able to see him until after Good Friday. She owned to him that she could not find courage to make known her intention of retiring so soon, in their conversation the evening be-

fore. This was an unexpected stroke to Oswald. That house, which the absence of Corinna now rendered so solitary, made the most painful impression upon his mind; he beheld her harp, her books, her drawings, all that habitually surrounded her; but she herself was no longer there. The recollection of his father's house struck him—he shuddered, and sunk into a chair, unable to support himself on his legs.

“In such a way as this,” cried he, “I might learn her death! That mind, so animated—that heart, throbbing with life—that dazzling form, in all the freshness of vernal bloom, might be crushed by the thunderbolt of fate, and the tomb of youth would be silent as that of age. Ah! what an illusion is happiness! What a fleeting moment stolen from Time, inflexible power, ever watching for his prey! Corinna! Corinna! you must not leave me; it was the charm of your presence which deprived

me of reflection ; all was confusion in my thoughts, dazzled as I was by the happy moments which I passed with you. Now I am alone—now I am restored to myself, and all my wounds are opened afresh.”—He invoked Corinna with a kind of despair, which could not be attributed to her short absence, but to the habitual anguish of his heart, which Corinna alone could assuage. Theresa, (that was the name of Corinna’s maid,) hearing the groans of Oswald, entered the room, and, touched with the manner in which he was affected, by the absence of her mistress, said to him, “My lord, let me comfort you ; I hope my dear lady will pardon me for betraying her secret. Come into my room, and you shall see your picture.” “My picture !” cried he. “Yes ; she has painted it from memory,” replied Theresa ; “she has got up at five o’clock in the morning, this week past, in order to finish it before she went to the convent.

Oswald saw this portrait, which was a striking likeness, and most elegantly executed : this proof of the impression which he had made on Corinna, penetrated him with the sweetest emotion. Opposite this portrait was a charming picture, representing the Blessed Virgin—and before this picture was the oratory of Corinna.—This singular medley of love and religion is common to the greater part of the Italian women, attended with circumstances more extraordinary than in the apartment of Corinna ; for free and unrestrained as was her life, the remembrance of Oswald was, in her mind, united with the purest hopes and purest sentiments ; but, however, to place thus the resemblance of a lover opposite an emblem of divinity, and to prepare for a retreat to a convent, by consecrating a week to paint that resemblance, was a trait that characterized the Italian women in general, rather than Corinna in parti-

cular. Their species of devotion supposes more imagination and sensibility than seriousness of mind and severity of principles;—nothing could be more contrary to Oswald's religious ideas ; yet how could he find fault with Corinna, at the very moment when he received so affecting a proof of her love ?

He minutely surveyed this chamber, which he now entered for the first time : at the head of Corinna's bed he saw the portrait of an elderly man, whose physiognomy was not Italian ; two bracelets were hanging near this portrait, one formed of black and light hair twisted together, and the other of the most lovely flaxen ; and what appeared a most remarkable effect of chance, perfectly resembling that of Lucilia Edgermond, which he had observed very attentively three years ago on account of its extreme beauty. Oswald contemplated these bracelets without uttering a

word, for to interrogate Theresa he felt unworthy of him.—But Theresa, fancying she guessed Oswald's thoughts, and wishing to remove from his mind every jealous suspicion, hastened to inform him, that during eleven years that she had waited on Corinna, her mistress had always worn these bracelets, and that she knew they were composed of the hair of her father and mother, and that of her sister. “You have been eleven years with Corinna,” said Lord Nelville; “you know then——” blushing, he checked himself of a sudden, ashamed of the question he was about to put, and quitted the house immediately, to avoid saying another word.

In going away, he turned about several times to behold the windows of Corinna, and when he had lost sight of her habitation, he felt a sadness now new to him—that which springs from solitude. In the evening, he sought to dissipate his

melancholy in joining a party of distinction ; for, to find a charm in reverie, we must, in our happy, as well as in our clouded moments, be at peace with ourselves.

The party he visited was soon insupportable to Lord Nelville, inasmuch as it made him feel, more sensibly, all the charms that Corinna could diffuse through society, by observing the void caused by her absence: he essayed to converse with some ladies, who answered him in that insipid phraseology which is established to avoid expressing, truly, our sentiments and opinions, if those who use it can have any thing of this sort to conceal. He approached several groupes of gentlemen who seemed, by their voice and gesture, to be discoursing upon some important subject ; how was he surprised to hear them discussing the most miserable topic in the most common manner. He then sat down to contem-

plate, at his ease, that vivacity without motive, and without aim, which is found in most numerous assemblies; nevertheless, mediocrity in Italy is by no means a disagreeable character; it has little vanity, little jealousy, and much respect for superiority of mind; and if it fatigues with its dulness, it hardly ever offends by assuming.

It was in these very assemblies, however, that Oswald had found so much to interest him a few days before; the slight obstacle which the company opposed to his conversation with Corinna,—the speedy opportunity which she took to return to him, as soon as she had been sufficiently polite to the rest of the circle,—the similarity of sentiment which existed between them, in the observations which the company suggested,—the pleasure which Corinna took when discoursing in presence of Oswald, to address, indirectly, to him some

reflection of which he alone comprehended the true meaning, had attached such recollections to every part of this very room, that Oswald had been deluded so far as to believe, that there was something amusing in these assemblies themselves. “ Ah !” said he, in departing, “ it was here as every where else—she was the life of the scene ; let me rather seek the most desert spot till she return. I shall feel her absence less bitterly when there is nothing about me bearing the resemblance of pleasure.”

BOOK X.

*Holy week.*

CHAP. I.

OSWALD passed the following day in the gardens of some male convents. He went first to that of the Chartreux, and stopped some time before he entered, to contemplate two Egyptian lions, which are at a little distance from the gate. Those lions have a remarkable expression of strength and repose; there is something in their physiognomy belonging neither to the animal nor the man: they seem a natural

power, which enables us to form a conception how the gods of the Pagan theology might be represented under this emblem.

The convent of the Chartreux is built upon the ruins of the Thermæ of Dioclesian; and the church, by the side of the convent, is decorated with such of its pillars as remained standing. The monks, who inhabit this convent, are very eager to shew them, and the interest they take in these ruins, seems to be the only one they feel in this world. The mode of life observed by the Chartreux, supposes in them either a very limited mind, or the most noble, and continued elevation of religious sentiments; this succession of days, without any variety of event, reminds us of that celebrated line:

“Time motionless sleeps on the ruins of worlds.”

The whole employment of their life is to contemplate death. Activity of mind,

with such an uniformity of existence, would be a most cruel torment. In the midst of the cloister, grow four cypresses. This black and silent tree, which is with difficulty agitated by the wind, introduces no appearance of motion into this gloomy abode. Near the cypresses is a fountain, whose fall is so feeble and slow, that one would be led to call it the hour-glass of this solitude. Sometimes the moon penetrates it with her pale lustre, and her absence and return may be considered as an event in this monotonous scene.

Those men who exist thus, are, nevertheless, the same to whom war and all its bustle would scarcely suffice, if they had been brought up to it.

The different combinations of human destiny upon earth, afford an inexhaustible source of reflection. A thousand accidents pass, and a thousand habits are formed in the interior of the soul, which make every

individual a world, and the subject of a history. To know another perfectly, should be the work of a whole life; what is it then that we understand by knowing men? To govern them is practicable by human wisdom, but to comprehend them, belongs to God alone.

From the convent of the Chartreux, Oswald repaired to that of St. Bonaventure, built upon the ruins of the palace of Nero; there, where so many crimes have been committed without remorse, poor monks tormented by scruples of conscience, impose upon themselves the most cruel punishment for the slightest fault. “*Our only hope,*” said one of these devotees, “*is, that at the hour of death, our crimes may not exceed our penitence.*” Lord Nelville, as he entered this convent, struck his foot against a trap, and asking the use of it—“*It leads to our place of interment;*” said one of the young monks, who was already

struck with the malady caused by the bad air. The inhabitants of the south being very much afraid of death, we are astonished to find institutions in Italy, which fix the ideas upon this point; but it is in nature to be fond of thoughts that inspire us with dread. There is a kind of intoxication in melancholy, which is pleasing to the soul.

An ancient Sarcophagus of a young child serves for the fountain to this convent. The beautiful Palm tree which adorns Rome, is the only one of any sort in the garden of these monks; but they pay no attention to exterior objects. Their discipline is too rigorous to allow any kind of latitude to the mind. Their looks are cast down, their gait is slow, they make no use of their will. They have abdicated the government of themselves, so fatiguing is this empire to its dull possessor. This day, however, did not produce much

emotion in the soul of Oswald ; the imagination revolts at death, presented under all its various forms, in a manner so manifestly intentional. When we unexpectedly meet a *memento mori*, when it is nature and not man that speaks to our soul, the impression we receive is much deeper.

Oswald felt the most calm and gentle sensations when, at sun set, he entered the garden of *San Giovanni et Paolo*. The monks of this convent are subjected to a much less rigid discipline, and their garden commands a view of all the ruins of ancient Rome. From this spot is seen the Coliseum, the Forum, and all the triumphal arches, the obelisks, and the pillars which remain standing. What a fine situation for such an asylum ! The secluded monks are consoled for their own nothingness, in contemplating the monuments raised by those who are no more. Oswald strolled for a long time

beneath the umbrageous walks of this garden, whose beautiful trees sometimes interrupt, for a moment, the view of Rome, only to redouble the emotion which is felt on beholding it again. It was that hour of the evening, when all the clocks in Rome are heard to chime the *Ave Maria*.

————— Squilla di bontano
Che paja il giorno pianger che si muore.

DANTE.

“ *And the sound of the brass, in the distance, seems to lament the dying day.*”

In Italy they say: *I will see you an hour before; or an hour after the Ave Maria;* and the different periods of the day, and of the night, are thus religiously designated. Oswald enjoyed the admirable spectacle of the sun, which, towards the evening, descending slowly into the bosom of the ruins, appears for a moment submitted to the same destiny as the works

of man. Oswald felt all his habitual thoughts revive within him. Corinna herself was too charming, and promised too much happiness to occupy his mind at this moment. He sought the spirit of his father in the clouds, where the force of imagination traced his celestial form, and made him receive the pure breeze of heaven, as the benediction of his sainted parent.

CHAP. II.

THE desire of studying, and becoming acquainted with the Roman religion, determined Lord Nelville to seek an opportunity of hearing some of those preachers, who make the churches of this city resound with their eloquence during Lent. He reckoned the days that were to divide him from Corinna, and, during her absence, he wished to see nothing that appertained to the fine arts; nothing that derived its charm from the imagination. He could not support the emotion of pleasure pro-

duced by the chefs-d'œuvre, when he was not with Corinna ; he was only reconciled to happiness, when she was the cause of it. Poetry, painting, music, all that embellishes life by vague hopes, was painful to him out of her presence.

It is in the evening, with lights half extinguished, that the Roman preachers deliver their sermons in Holy week. All the women are then clad in black, in remembrance of the death of Jesus Christ, and there is something very moving in this anniversary mourning, which has been so often renewed during a lapse of ages. It is, therefore, impossible to enter, without genuine emotion, those beautiful churches, where the tombs so fitly dispose the soul for prayer ; but this emotion is generally destroyed, in a few moments, by the preacher.

His pulpit is a pretty long gallery, which he traverses from one end to the other,

with as much agitation as regularity. He never fails to set out at the beginning of a phrase, and to return at the end, like the motion of a pendulum ; and, nevertheless, he uses so much action, and his manner is so vehement, that one would suppose him divested of every thing mechanical. But it is, to use the expression, a kind of systematic fury that animates the orator, such as is frequently to be met with in Italy, where the vivacity of external action often indicates no more than a superficial emotion. A crucifix is suspended at the extremity of the pulpit ; the preacher, unties it, kisses it, presses it against his heart, and then restores it to its place, with the greatest *sang-froid*, when the pathetic period is concluded. There is a means of producing effect, which the ordinary preachers frequently have recourse to, which is the square cap they wear on their head, and which they take off, and

put on again with inconceivable rapidity. One of them, imputed to Voltaire, and particularly to Rousseau, the irreligion of the age. He threw his cap into the middle of the pulpit, charging it to represent Jean Jacques, and in this quality he harangued it, saying; “ *Well philosopher of Geneva, what have you to object to my arguments?*” He was silent for some minutes, as if he waited for a reply—the cap made no answer: he then put it upon his head again, and finished the conversation in these words: “ *now you are convinced I shall say no more.*”

These whimsical scenes often take place among the Roman preachers; for real talent in this department, is here very scarce. Religion is respected in Italy as an omnipotent law; it captivates the imagination by its forms and ceremonies; but moral tenets are less attended to in the pulpit, than dogmas of faith, which do not

penetrate the heart with religious sentiments. Thus the eloquence of the pulpit, as well as several other branches of literature, is absolutely abandoned to common ideas, which neither paint nor express any thing. A new thought would cause almost a kind of rumour in those minds at once so indolent and full of ardor that they need the calm of uniformity, which they love, because it offers repose to their thoughts. The ideas and phraseology of their sermons are confined to a sort of etiquette. They come almost one after another, and this order would be deranged, if the orator, speaking from himself, were to seek, in his own mind, what he should say. The Christian philosophy, whose aim is to discover the analogy between religion and human nature, is as little known to the Italian preachers as any other kind of philosophy. To think in matters of religion.

would scandalize them ; so much are they accustomed to move in a beaten track.

The worship of the Blessed Virgin is particularly dear to the Italians, and to every other nation of the south ; it seems, in some manner, united with all that is most pure and sensible in the affection we feel for woman. But the same exaggerated figures of rhetoric are found in what the preachers say upon this subject ; and it is impossible to conceive why their gestures do not turn into pleasantries all that is most serious. Hardly ever, in Italy, do we meet, in the august function of the pulpit, with a true accent, or a natural expression.

Oswald, weary of the most tiresome of all monotony—that of affected vehemence, went to the Coliseum, to hear the capuchin who was to preach there in the open air, at the foot of one of those altars which mark out, within the enclosure, what is called *the path of the cross*. What can

offer a more noble subject of eloquence than the aspect of this monument, of this amphitheatre, where the martyrs have succeeded to the gladiators ! But nothing of this kind must be expected from the poor capuchin, who, of the history of mankind, knows no more than that of his own life. Nevertheless, if we could be insensible to the badness of his discourse, we should feel ourselves moved by the different objects that surround him. The greater part of his auditors are of the confraternity of the *Camaldoli* ; they are clad, during their religious exercises, in a sort of grey robe, which entirely covers the head and the whole body, with two little holes for the eyes : It is thus that the spirits of the dead might be represented. These men, who are thus concealed beneath their vestments, prostrate themselves on the earth, and strike their breasts. When the preacher throws himself on his knees, crying *mercy*

and pity, the congregation throw themselves on their knees also, and repeat this same cry, which dies away beneath the ancient porticoes of the Coliseum. It is impossible, at this moment, not to feel the most religious emotion ; this appeal, from earthly misery to celestial good, penetrates to the inmost sanctuary of the soul. Oswald started when all the audience fell on their knees ; he remained standing, not to join in a worship foreign to his own ; but it was painful to him that he could not associate, publicly, with mortals of any description, who prostrated themselves before God. Alas ! is not an invocation of heavenly pity equally suited to every religion ?

The people had been struck with the fine figure of Lord Nelville, and his foreign manners, but were by no means scandalized at his not kneeling down. There are no people in the world more tolerant than the Romans ; they are accustomed to visitors,

who come only to see and observe ; and whether by an effect of pride or of indolence, they never seek to instil their opinions into others. What is more extraordinary still, is, that during Holy Week particularly, there are many among them who inflict corporal punishment upon themselves ; and while they are performing this flagellation, the church-doors are open, and they care not who enters. They are a people who do not trouble their heads about others ; they do nothing to be looked at ; they refrain from nothing because they are observed ; they always proceed to their object, and seek their pleasure, without suspecting that there is a sentiment, called vanity, which has no object, no pleasure, except the desire of being applauded.

CHAP. III.

THE ceremonies of Holy Week at Rome, have been much spoken of. Foreigners come thither expressly, during Lent, to enjoy this spectacle; and as the music of the Sixtine Chapel, and the illumination of St. Peter, are beauties *unique* in themselves, it is natural that they should excite a lively curiosity; but expectation is not equally satisfied. The ceremonies themselves, properly speaking—the dinner of the twelve Apostles, served by the Pope—the washing of the feet—and all

the different customs of this solemn season, excite very moving recollections; but a thousand inevitable circumstances often injure the interest and the dignity of this spectacle. All those who assist at it are not equally collected, equally occupied with pious ideas. These ceremonies, so often repeated, are become a sort of mechanical exercise for most of them, and the young priests dispatch the service of great festivals with an activity, and a dexterity, little calculated to produce any religious effect. That indefinite, that unknown, that mysterious impression, which religion ought to excite, is entirely destroyed by that species of attention which we cannot help paying to the manner in which each acquits himself of his functions. The avidity of some, for the meats presented them, and the indifference of others in the genuflections which they multiply, and the prayers

which they recite, often strip the festival of its solemnity.

The ancient costumes, which still serve for the vestments of the priests, agree badly with modern faces. The Grecian bishop, with his long beard, has the most respectable appearance. The ancient custom also, of making a reverence after the manner of women, instead of bowing as men do now, produces an impression by no means serious. In a word, the *ensemble* is not in harmony, and the ancient is blended with the modern, without sufficient care being taken to strike the imagination, at least, to avoid all that may distract it. A worship, dazzling and majestic in its external forms, is certainly very proper to fill the soul with the most elevated sentiments; but care must be taken that the ceremonies do not degenerate into a spectacle, in which each one plays his part—in which each one

studies what he must do at such a moment; when he is to pray, when he is to finish his prayer; when to kneel down, and when to get up. The regulated ceremonies of a court, introduced into a temple of devotion, confine the flights of the heart, which can alone lift man towards the Deity.

These observations are pretty generally felt by foreigners, but the Romans, for the most part, do not grow weary of those ceremonies; and every year they find in them new pleasure. A singular trait in the character of the Italians is, that their mutability of temper does not make them inconstant, nor does their vivacity render variety necessary to them. They are, in every thing, patient and persevering; their imagination embellishes what they possess; they occupy their life, instead of rendering it uneasy; they think every thing more magnificent, more imposing, more fine, than it really is: and whilst, in other nations, vanity consists in

emblazoning themselves, that of the Italians, or rather their warmth and vivacity, makes them find pleasure in admiring others.

Lord Nelville, from all that the Romans had said to him, expected to receive more effect from the ceremonies of holy week. He regretted the noble and simple festivals of the Anglican church. He returned home, with a painful impression; for nothing is more sad than not being moved with what we think ought to move us; we believe that our soul is become dry, we fear that the fire of enthusiasm is extinguished in us, without which the faculty of thinking can only serve to disgust us with life.

CHAP. IV.

BUT Good Friday soon restored to lord Nelville all those religious emotions, the want of which he so much regretted on the preceding days. The seclusion of Corinna was about to terminate ; he anticipated the happiness of seeing her again : the sweet expectations of tender affection accord with piety ; it is only a factious, worldly life, that is entirely hostile to it. Oswald repaired to the Sixtine Chapel, to hear the celebrated *miserere*, so much talked of all over Europe. He arrived

thither whilst it was yet day, and beheld those celebrated paintings of Michael Angelo, which represent the last judgment, with all the terrible power of the subject and the talent which has handled it. Michael Angelo was penetrated with the study of Dante; and the painter, in imitation of the poet, represents mythological beings in presence of Jesus Christ; but he always makes Paganism the evil principle; and it is under the form of demons that he characterises the heathen fables. On the vault of the chapel is represented the prophets, and the Sybils, called, in testimony, by the christians,

Teste David cum Sibyllâ.

A crowd of angels surround them; and this whole vault, painted thus, seems to bring us nearer to heaven, but with a gloomy and formidable aspect. Hardly does the day penetrate the windows, which cast upon the pictures rather shadow than light.

The obscurity enlarges those figures, already so imposing, which the pencil of Michael Angelo has traced; the incense, whose perfume has somewhat of a funeral smell, fills the air in this enclosure, and every sensation is prelusive to the most profound of all—that which the music is to produce.

Whilst Oswald was absorbed by the reflections which every object that surrounded him gave birth to, he saw Corinna, whose presence he had not hoped to behold so soon, enter the women's gallery, behind the grating which separated it from that of the men. She was dressed in black, all pale with absence, and trembled so when she perceived Oswald, that she was obliged to lean on the balustrade for support as she advanced; at this moment, the *miserere* began.

The voices, perfectly exercised in this ancient song, proceeded from a gallery at

the commencement of the vault; the singers are not seen; the music seems to hover in the air; and every instant the fall of day renders the chapel more gloomy. It was not that voluptuous and impassioned harmony, which Oswald and Corinna had heard eight days before; they were holy strains, which counselled mortals to renounce every earthly enjoyment. Corinna fell on her knees before the grating, and remained plunged in the most profound meditation: Oswald himself disappeared from her sight. She thought that, in such a moment, she could wish to die, if the separation of the soul from the body could take place without pain; if, on a sudden, an angel could carry away, on his wings, our sentiments and our thoughts—sparks of ethereal fire, returning towards their source—death would then be, to use the expression, only a spontaneous act of the heart,—an ardent and successful prayer.

The *miserere*, that is to say, *have mercy on us*, is a psalm, composed of stanzas, which are sung alternately in a very different manner. In one stanza, a celestial music is heard, and the following, in recitative, is murmured in a dull and almost hoarse tone. One would say, that it is the reply of harsh and rugged characters to sensible hearts; that it is the reality of life which withers and repels the wishes of generous souls: when the sweet choristers resume their strain, hope revives, but when the verse of recitative begins, a cold sensation seizes upon the hearer, not caused by terror, but by a repression of enthusiasm. At length, the last piece, more noble and affecting than all the others, leaves a pure and gentle impression upon the soul, like the soft calm which often precedes death.

The torches are extinguished; night advances, and the figures of the prophets

and the sybils, appear like phantoms enveloped in twilight. The silence is profound ; a word spoken would be insupportable in the present state of the soul, when all is internal ; and as soon as the last sound expires, all depart slowly, and without the least noise.

Corinna followed the procession, which repaired to the temple of St. Peter, which was then lighted only by an illuminated cross. This sign of grief, alone and shining in the august obscurity of this immense edifice, is the most beautiful image of christianity in the midst of sublunary darkness. A pale and distant light is cast on the statues which adorn the tombs. The living, who are perceived in crowds beneath these vaults, seem like pigmies, compared with the images of the dead. There is around the cross, a space which it enlightens, where the Pope, clad in white, is seen prostrate, with all the cardinals ranged behind him.

they remain there for half an hour, in the most profound silence, and it is impossible not to be moved at this spectacle. We know not the subject of their prayers; we hear not their secret groanings; but they are old, they are much before us in the journey to the tomb. When we have reached their years, will God so ennoble our age, that the decline of life may be the first days of immortality?

Corinna, also,—the young and beautiful Corinna,—was kneeling behind the train of priests, and the soft light reflected on her countenance, gave it a pale hue, without diminishing the lustre of her eyes. Oswald contemplated her as a beautiful picture—a being that inspired adoration. When this secret prayer was concluded, she arose; Lord Nelville dared not yet approach her, respecting the religious meditation in which he thought her plunged; but she came to him first, with a transport of happiness;

and this sentiment pervading all her actions, she received, with a most lively gaiety, all those who accosted her in St. Peter's, which was become, all at once, a great public promenade, and made a rendezvous to discuss topics of business and pleasure.

Oswald was astonished at this mutability, which caused such opposite impressions to succeed each other; and though the gaiety of Corinna gave him pleasure, he was surprised to find in her no trace of the emotions of the preceding day. He did not conceive how, upon so solemn a day, they could permit this fine church to be converted into a Roman coffee-house, where people met for pleasure; and beholding Corinna in the midst of her circle, talking with so much vivacity, and not thinking on the objects that surrounded her, he conceived a sentiment of mistrust, as to the levity of which she might be capable. She perceived it, and quitting her company ab-

ruptly, she took the arm of Oswald, to walk with him in the church, saying, “ I have never held any conversation with you upon my religious sentiments—permit me to speak a little upon that subject now ; perhaps I shall be able to dissipate those clouds which I perceive rising in your mind.

CHAP. V.

“THE difference of our religions, my dear Oswald,” continued Corinna, “is the cause of that secret censure which you cannot help discovering to me. Your’s is serious and rigid—our’s, lively and tender. It is generally believed, that Catholicism is more rigorous than Protestantism ; and that may be true in a country where a struggle has subsisted between the two religions ; but we have no religious dissensions in Italy, and you have experienced much of them in England. The result of this difference is,

that Catholicism in Italy has assumed a character of mildness and indulgence; and that to destroy it in England, the Reformation has armed itself with the greatest severity in principles and morals. Our religion, like that of the ancients, animates the arts, inspires the poets, and makes a party, if I may so express it, with all the powers of life; whilst your's, establishing itself in a country where reason predominates more than imagination, has assumed a character of moral austerity, which it will never quit. Our's speaks in the name of love, and your's in the name of duty. Your principles are liberal, our dogmas are absolute; nevertheless, our despotic orthodoxy accommodates itself to particular circumstances, and your religious liberty enforces obedience to its laws, without any exception. It is true, that our Catholicism imposes upon those who have embraced a monastic life, very hard penance. This state, freely

chosen, is a mysterious relation between man and the Deity ; but the secular religion in Italy, is an habitual source of affecting emotions. Love, hope, and faith, are the principal virtues of this religion, and all these virtues confer happiness. Our priests, therefore, far from forbidding, at any time, the pure sentiment of joy, tell us that it expresses our gratitude towards our Creator. What they exact of us, is an observance of those practices which prove our respect for our worship, and our desire to please God, and which are charity for the unfortunate, and repentance of our errors. But they do not refuse to absolve, when we zealously entreat it ; and the attachments of the heart inspire a more indulgent pity amongst us than any where else. Has not Jesus Christ said of Magdalen : *Much shall be pardoned her, because she hath loved much ?* These words have been uttered

beneath a sky, beautiful as our's ; this same sky implores for us the Divine mercy ”

“ Corinna ! ” answered Lord Nelville, “ how can I combat words so sweet, and of which my heart stands so much in need ? But I will do it, nevertheless, because it is not for a day that I love Corinna—I expect, with her, a long futurity of happiness and virtue. The most pure religion is that which makes a continual homage to the Supreme Being, by the sacrifice of our passions, and the fulfilment of our duties. Human morality is the worship of the Deity ; and it would be degrading the idea we form of the Creator, to suppose that he wills any thing in relation with his creature, that is not worthy of his own intellectual perfection. Paternal authority, that noble image of a master, sovereignly good, demands nothing of its children that does not tend to make them better or happier : How then can we imagine that God

would exact any thing from man, which has not man himself for its object? You see, also, what confusion in the understandings of your people results from the practice of attaching more importance to religious ceremonies than to moral duties. It is after Holy Week, you know, that the greatest number of murders is committed at Rome. The people think, to use the expression, that they have laid in a stock, during Lent, and expend, in assassination, the treasures of their penitence. Criminals have been seen, yet reeking with murder, who have scrupled to eat meat on a Friday; and gross minds, who have been persuaded that the greatest of crimes consists in disobeying the discipline of the church, exhaust their consciences on this head, and conceive that the Deity, like human sovereigns, esteems submission to his power more than every other virtue. This is to substitute the sycophancy of a courtier for

the respect which the Creator inspires, as the source and reward of a scrupulous and delicate life. Catholicism in Italy, confining itself to external demonstrations, dispenses the soul from meditation and abstraction. When the spectacle is over, the emotion ceases, the duty is fulfilled, and they are not, as with us, a long time absorbed in thoughts and sentiments, which give birth to a rigid examination of our conduct and our heart."

"You are severe, my dear Oswald," replied Corinna; "it is not the first time I have remarked it. If religion consisted only in a strict observance of moral duties, in what would it be superior to reason and philosophy? And what sentiments of piety could we discover, if our principal aim were to stifle the feelings of the heart? The stoics were as enlightened as we, as to the duties, and the austerity, of human conduct; but that which is peculiar to christi-

anity alone, is the religious enthusiasm which blends with every affection of the heart; it is the power of love and pity; it is the worship of sentiment, and of indulgence, so favourable to the flights of the soul towards heaven. How are we to interpret the parable of the Prodigal Son, if not that love, sincere love, is preferred even to the most exact discharge of every duty. This son had quitted his paternal abode, and his brother had remained there; he had plunged into all the dissipation and pleasure of the world, and his brother had never deviated, for a single moment, from the regularity of domestic life; but he returned, full of love for his father, and repentance for his past follies, and his parent celebrated this return by a festival. Ah! can it be doubted, that among the mysteries of our nature, love is what remains to us of our celestial inheritance? Even our virtues are often too complicated with life, for us

to comprehend the gradations of good, and which is the secret sentiment that governs, and leads us astray: I ask of God to teach me to adore him, and I feel the effect of my prayers, in the tears that I shed. But, to support this disposition of the soul, religious practices are more necessary than you think; they are a constant communication with the Deity; they are daily actions, unconnected with the interests of life, and solely directed towards the invisible world. Exterior objects are also a great help to piety; the soul falls back upon itself, if the fine arts, great monuments, and harmonic strains, do not reanimate the poetical genius, which is synonymous with religious inspiration.

“The most vulgar man, when he prays, when he suffers, and places hope in heaven, has, at that moment, something in him, which he would express,

like Milton, Homer, or Tasso, if education had taught him to clothe his thoughts with words. There are only two distinct classes of men, in the world; those who feel enthusiasm, and those who despise it; every other difference is the work of society. The former cannot find words to express their sentiments, and the latter know what it is necessary to say, to fill up the void of their heart. But the spring, that dashes from the rock, speaks with the voice of heaven, and inspires talent, religion, and love.

“The pomp of our worship; those pictures in which the kneeling saints express a continual prayer in their looks; those statues, placed on the tombs, as if they were one day to rise with their inhabitants; those churches, and their immense vaulted roofs, have an intimate connection with religious ideas. I like this splendid homage paid by men to that which promises them neither

fortune nor power—to that which neither punishes nor rewards them, but by a sentiment of the heart: I then feel more proud of my being; I recognise something disinterested in man; and were even religious magnificence multiplied to an extreme, I should love that prodigality of terrestrial riches, lavished on another life: enough is provided for the morrow, enough care is taken for the economy of human affairs. How I love inutility, when I consider, that existence is only a painful toil for a miserable gain! But if, on this earth, we are journeying towards heaven, what can we do better, than to take every means of elevating our soul, towards the infinite, the invisible, and the eternal, in the midst of all the limits that surround us?

“ Jesus Christ permitted a weak, and, perhaps, repentant woman, to anoint his feet with the most precious perfumes,

and repulsed those who advised that those perfumes should be reserved for a more profitable use. "*Let her alone,*" said he, "*for I am only with you for a short time.*" Alas! all that is good, and sublime upon earth, is only with us for a short time; age, infirmity, and death, would soon dry up that drop of dew which falls from heaven, and only rests upon the flowers. Let us then, dear Oswald, confound every thing,—love, religion, genius, the sun, the perfumes, music, and poetry: atheism only consists in coldness, egotism, and baseness. Jesus Christ has said: *When two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them.* And what is it, O God! to be assembled in thy name, if it be not to enjoy thy sublime gifts, and to offer thee our homage, to thank thee for that existence which thou hast given us; above all, to thank thee, when

a heart, also created by thee, answers entirely to our own?"

A celestial inspiration, at this moment, animated the countenance of Corinna. Oswald could hardly refrain from falling on his knees before her, in the midst of the temple, and was silent for a long time, to indulge in the pleasure of recalling her words, and retracing them still in her looks. At last he set about replying; for he would not abandon a cause that was dear to him. "Corinna," said he, then, "indulge your love with a few words more. His heart is not dry; no, Corinna, believe me it is not, and if I am an advocate for austerity in principle and action, it is because it renders sentiment more deep and permanent. If I love reason in religion, that is to say, if I reject contradictory dogmas, and human means of producing effect upon men, it is because I perceive the Deity in reason as well as in enthusiasm; and if I cannot bear

that man should be enfeebled in any one of his faculties, it is because I conceive them all barely sufficient to comprehend a truth, which reflection reveals to him, as well as the instinct of the heart, the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul. What can be added to these sublime ideas—to their union with virtue? What can we add thereto, that is not beneath them? The poetical enthusiasm, which gives you so many charms, is not, I dare assert it, the most salutary devotion. Corinna, how could we, by this disposition, prepare for the innumerable sacrifices, which duty exacts of us! There was no revelation, except by the flights of the soul, when human destiny, present and future, only offered itself to the mind through clouds; but for us, to whom christianity has rendered it clear and positive, the feeling of it may be our recompense; but it ought not to be our only

guide: you describe the existence of the blessed, not that of mortals. Religious life is a combat, not a hymn. If we were not in this world condemned, to repress the evil inclinations of others, and ourselves, there would in effect be no other distinction, to make them those of cold and enthusiastic minds. But man is a more harsh, and formidable creature, than your heart paints him to you; and reason, in piety, and authority in duty, are a necessary curb to the wanderings of his pride.

“In whatever manner you may consider exterior pomp, and the multiplied ceremonies of your religion, believe me, my love, that the contemplation of the universe, and its author, will one day be the chief worship, that which will fill the imagination, without any thing futile, or absurd, being found in it, upon investigation. Those dogmas, which wound my reason, also cool my enthusiasm. Un-

doubtedly the world, such as it is, is a mystery, which we can neither deny, nor comprehend; it would, therefore, be foolish to refuse credence, to what we are unable to explain; but that which is contradictory is always of human creation. The mysteries of heavenly origin are above the lights of the mind; but not in opposition to them. A German philosopher has said: *I know but two beautiful things in the universe: the starry sky above our heads, and the sentiment of moral duty in our hearts.* In effect all the wonders of the creation are comprised in these words.

“So far from a simple, and severe religion searing our hearts, I should have thought, before I had known you, Corinna, that it was the only one which could concentrate, and perpetuate, the affections. I have seen the most pure and austere conduct, unfold in a man

the most inexhaustible tenderness; I have seen him preserve, even to old age, a virginity of soul, which the passions, and their criminal effects, would necessarily have withered. Undoubtedly repentance is a fine thing, and I have more need than any person to believe in its efficacy; but repeated repentance fatigues the soul—this sentiment can only regenerate once. It is the redemption which is accomplished at the bottom of our soul, and this great sacrifice cannot be renewed. When human weakness is accustomed to it, it loses the force necessary to love with constancy.

“I shall offer some objections of the same kind, to that splendid form of worship, which, according to you, acts so powerfully upon the imagination: I believe the imagination to be modest, and retired as the heart. The emotions, which are imposed on it, are less pow-

erful, than those born of itself. I have seen in the Cevennes, a protestant minister, who preached towards the evening, in the bosom of the mountains. He invoked the tomb of the French, banished and proscribed by their brethren, whose ashes had been assembled together in this spot. He promised their friends that they should meet them again in a better world. He said, that a virtuous life secured us happiness; he said: *do good to mankind, that God may cicatrize in your heart the wound of grief.* He testified his astonishment, at the inflexibility, and hard-heartedness of man, the creature of a day, to his fellow man, equally ephemeral with himself, and seized upon that terrible idea of death, which the living have conceived, but which they will never be able to exhaust. In short, he said nothing that was not as affecting as true:

his words were perfectly in harmony with nature. The torrent which was heard in the distance, the glimmering light of the stars, seemed to express the same thought, under another form. This magnificence, which does not offend misfortune, and all this imposing simplicity, interested the soul more deeply than dazzling ceremonies could have done."

On the second day after this conversation, (Easter Sunday,) Corinna and Lord Nelville went together to the square of St. Peter, where the Pope appears upon the most elevated balcony of the church, and asks of heaven that benediction which he is about to bestow on the land; when he pronounces these words, *urbi et orbi*, (to the city and to the world)—all the people assembled fell on their knees, and Corinna and Lord Nelville felt, by the emotion which they experienced at this moment, that all forms of worship resemble

each other. The religious sentiment intimately unites men among themselves, when self-love and fanaticism do not make it an object of jealousy and hatred. To pray together in the same language, whatever be the form of worship, is the most pathetic bond of fraternity, and of sympathy, which men can contract upon earth.

CHAP. VI.

EASTER-DAY was passed, and Corinna took no notice of the fulfilment of her promise, to confide her history to Lord Nelville. Wounded by this silence, he said one day before her, that he had heard much of the beauty of Naples, and that he had a mind to visit it. Corinna, discovering in a moment what was passing in his soul, proposed to perform the journey with him. She flattered herself, that she should be able to postpone the confession which he required of her, by

giving him this proof of her love. And besides, she thought, that if he should take her with him, it would be, without doubt, because he desired to consecrate his life to her. She waited then, with anxiety for what he should say to her, and her almost suppliant looks, seemed to intreat a favourable answer. Oswald could not resist; he had, at first, been surprised at this offer, and the simplicity with which Corinna made it, and hesitated for some time, before he accepted it; but in beholding the agitation of her he loved, her palpitating bosom—her eyes suffused with tears, he consented to set out with her, without reflecting upon the importance of such a resolution. Corinna was elevated to the summit of joy; for at this moment her heart entirely relied on the passion of Oswald.

The day was fixed upon, and the sweet perspective of their journey made

every other idea disappear. They amused themselves with settling the details of their journey, and every one of these details was a source of pleasure. Happy disposition of the soul, in which all the arrangements of life have a particular charm, from their connection with some hope of the heart! That moment arrives too soon, when each day of our existence is fatiguing, when every morning requires its irksome labours to conduct us to the evening.

The moment Lord Nelville left Corinna's house, in order to prepare every thing for their departure, the Count d'Erfeuil arrived, and learnt of her, the project which they had just determined on.—“ Surely you don't think of such a thing!” said he, “ what! travel with Lord Nelville, without his being your husband! without his having promised you to become so! And what will you

do, if he abandon you?" "Why," replied Corinna, "in any situation of life, if he were to cease to love me, I should be the most wretched creature in the world!" "Yes; but if you have done nothing to compromise your character, you will remain entirely yourself."—"Remain entirely myself, when the deepest sentiment of my life shall be withered? when my heart shall be broken?"—"The public will not know it, and by a little dissimulation you would lose nothing in the general opinion." "And why should I take pains to preserve that opinion," replied Corinna, "if not to gain an additional charm in the eyes of him I love?"—"We may cease to love," answered the Count, "but we cannot cease to live in the midst of society, and to need its services."—"Ah! if I could think," retorted Corinna, "that that day would arrive, when Oswald's

affection would no longer exist; if I could think of it, I should already have ceased to love. What is love when it anticipates and reckons upon the moment when it shall no longer exist? If there be any thing religious in this sentiment, it is because it makes every other interest disappear, and, like devotion, takes a pleasure in the entire sacrifice of itself."

"What is that you tell me?" replied the Count d'Erfeuil, "can such a sensible lady as you fill her head with such nonsense? It is the advantage of we men, that ladies think as you do—we have then more ascendancy over them; but your superiority must not be lost, it must be serviceable to you." "Serviceable to me?" said Corinna, "Ah! I owe it much, if it has enabled me to feel more acutely, all that is interesting and generous in the character of Lord Nelville."—"Lord Nelville is like other men," said the

Count; “ he will return to his native country, he will pursue his profession ; he will become reasonable at last, and you would imprudently expose your reputation by going to Naples with him.”—“ I am ignorant of the intentions of Lord Nelville,” observed Corinna, “ and, perhaps, I should have done better to have reflected more deeply, before I had let him obtain such power over my heart ; but now, what signifies an additional sacrifice ! Does not my life depend on his love ? I feel pleasure, on the contrary, in leaving myself no resource ;—there is none when the heart is wounded ; nevertheless, the world may sometimes think the contrary ; and I love to reflect, that even with this regard, my calamity would be complete, if Lord Nelville were to leave me !”—“ And does he know how you expose yourself on his account ?” proceeded d’Erfeuil.—“ I have taken great

care to conceal it from him," answered Corinna, and as he is not well acquainted with the customs of this country, I have a little exaggerated to him the latitude of conduct which they allow. I must exact from you a promise, that you will never undeceive him in this respect—I wish him to be perfectly free, he can never make me happy, by any kind of sacrifice. The sentiment which renders me happy is the flower of my life; were it once to decay, neither kindness nor delicacy could revive it. I conjure you then, my dear Count, not to interfere with my destiny; no opinion of your's, upon the affections of the heart, can possibly apply to me. Your observations are very prudent, very sensible, and extremely applicable to the situations of ordinary life; but you would innocently do me a great injury, in attempting to judge of my character in the same manner as

as large bodies of people are judged, for whom there are maxims ready made. My sufferings, my enjoyments, and my feelings, are peculiar to myself, and whoever would influence my happiness, must contemplate me alone, unconnected with the rest of the world."

The self-love of Count d'Erfeuil was a little wounded by the inutility of his counsels, and the decided proof of her affection for Lord Nelville, which Corinna gave him: he had known very well, that he himself was not beloved by her, he knew, equally, that Oswald was; but it was unpleasant to him to hear this so openly avowed. There is always in the favour which a man finds in a lady's sight, something that offends even the best friends of that man.—"I see that I can do nothing for you," said the Count; "but should you become very unhappy, you will think of me;

in the mean time, I am going to leave Rome, for since you and Lord Nelville are about to quit it, I should be too much *ennuyé* in your absence. I shall certainly see you both again, either in Scotland, or Italy ; for since I can do nothing better with myself, I have acquired a relish for travelling. Forgive my having taken the liberty to counsel you, charming Corinna, and believe me ever devoted to you !”—Corinna thanked him, and separated with a sentiment of regret. Her acquaintance with him commenced at the same time as with Oswald, and this remembrance formed a tie between them, which she did not like to see broken. She conducted herself agreeably to what she had declared to the Count. Some uneasiness disturbed, for a moment, the joy with which Lord Nelville had accepted the project of the journey : he feared that their departure for Naples might injure Corinna, and wished

to obtain her secret, before they went, in order to know with certainty, whether some invincible obstacle to their union might not exist; but she declared to him, that she would not relate her history till they arrived at Naples, and sweetly deceived him, as to what the public opinion would be on her conduct. Oswald yielded to the illusion: love, in a weak and undecided humour, half deceives a man, and reason half enlightens him. It is the present emotion that decides, which of the two halves shall be the whole. The mind of Lord Neville was singularly expansive, and penetrating; but he only formed a correct judgment of himself, in reviewing his past conduct. He never had but a confused idea of his present situation. Susceptible at once, of transport and remorse, of passion and timidity, those contrasts did not permit him to know

himself, till the event of his internal conflict had been decided.

When the friends of Corinna, particularly the prince Castel-Forte, was informed of her project, they felt considerably chagrined. The prince Castel-Forte was so much pained at it, that he resolved, in a short time, to go and join her. There was certainly no vanity in thus filling up the train of a favoured lover; but he could not support the dreadful void which he should find in the absence of Corinna. He had no acquaintance but the circle he met at her house; and he never entered any other. The company which assembled around her would disperse, when she should be no longer there; and it would be impossible to collect together the fragments. The prince Castel-Forte was little accustomed to domestic life: though possessing a good share of intellect, he did not like the fatigue of study; the whole day, therefore,

would have been an insufferable weight to him, if he had not come, morning and evening, to visit Corinna. She was about to depart—he knew not what to do; however he promised himself, in secret, to approach her as a friend, for whom there was no immediate occasion; but who was ever at hand to offer his consolation, in the moment of misfortune; such a friend may be sure that his hour of trial will come.

Corinna felt oppressed with melancholy, in thus breaking all her former connections; she had, for some years, in Rome, led a manner of life that pleased her—she was the centre of attraction to every artist, and enlightened man. Her mind, and her circumstances, were perfectly independent.—How charming was this, and what was she about to become? If destined to the happiness of espousing Oswald, he would take her to England,

and what would she be thought of there ; How would she be able to confine herself to a mode of existence so different from that she had known for six years past ! But these sentiments only passed through her mind, and her passion for Oswald always obliterated every trace of them. She saw, she heard him, and only counted the hours by his absence, or his presence. Who can dispute with happiness ! Who, when visited by felicity, can receive it coldly ! Corinna was not possessed of much foresight—neither fear nor hope, were made for her—her reliance on the future was confused, and, in this respect, her imagination did her little good, and much harm.

On the morning of her departure, the prince Castel-Forte visited her, and, with tears in his eyes, said : “ Will you not return to Rome ? ” “ Oh dear yes ! ” replied she, “ we shall be back in a month . ”

—“But if you marry Lord Nelville, you must leave Italy!” “Leave Italy!” said Corinna, with a sigh.—“This country” continued the prince Castel-Forte, “where your language is spoken, where you are so well known, where you are so warmly admired, and your friends Corinna—your friends! Where will you be beloved as you are here? Where will you find that perfection of the imagination, and the fine arts, so congenial to your soul? Is then our whole life composed of one sentiment? Is it not language, customs, and manners, that compose the love of our country; that love which creates a sickness of heart so terrible in exile?” “Ah, what is it you tell me,” cried Corinna, “have I not felt it? Is it not that which has decided my fate?”—She regarded mournfully her room, and the statues that adorned it, then the Tiber, which rolled its waves beneath her win-

dows, and the sky whose beauty seemed to invite her to stay. But at that moment Oswald, on horseback, passed the bridge of St. Angelo, swift as lightning. "There he is!" cried Corinna. Hardly had she uttered these words, when he was already arrived,—she ran too meet him, and both impatient to set out, hastened to ascend the carriage. Corinna, however, took a kind farewell of the prince Castel-Forte; but his obliging expressions were lost, in the midst of the cries of postillions, the neighing of horses, and all that bustle of departure, sometimes sad, and sometimes intoxicating, according to the fear, or the hope, which the new chances of destiny inspire.

BOOK XI.



Naples and the Hermitage of St. Salvador.

CHAP. I.

OSWALD was proud of carrying off his conquest; he who felt himself almost ever disturbed in his enjoyments, by reflections and regrets, for once experienced not the pangs of uncertainty. It was not that he was decided, but he did not think about it, and he followed the tide of events, hoping it would lead him to the object of his wishes.

They traversed the country of Albano, where they still shew what is believed to be the tomb of the Horatii and the Cu-

riatii.(25) They passed near the lake of Nemi, and the sacred woods that surround it. It is said that Hippolitus was revived by Diana in these parts; she would not permit horses to approach it, and by this prohibition perpetuated the memory of her young favourite's misfortune. Thus, in Italy, our memory is refreshed by History and Poetry almost at every step, and the charming situations which recal them, soften all that is melancholy in the past, and seem to preserve an eternal youth.

Oswald and Corinna traversed the Pontine marshes—a country at once fertile and pestilential,—where, with all the fecundity of nature, a single habitation is not to be found. Some sickly men change your horses, recommending to you not to sleep in passing the marshes; for sleep there is really the harbinger of death. The plough which some imprudent cultivators, will still sometimes guide over this fatal land, is drawn

by buffaloes, whilst the most brilliant sun, sheds its lustre on this melancholy spectacle. The marshy and unwholesome parts in the north, are announced by their repulsive aspect; but in the most fatal countries of the south, nature preserves a serenity, the deceitful mildness of which is an illusion to travellers. If it be true that it is very dangerous to sleep in crossing the Pontine marshes, their invincible soporific influence, in the heat of the day, is one of those perfidious impressions which we receive from this spot. Lord Nelville constantly watched over Corinna. Sometimes she leant her head on Theresa, who accompanied them: sometimes she closed her eyes, overcome by the languor of the air. Oswald awakened her immediately, with inexpressible terror; and though he was naturally taciturn, he was now inexhaustible in subjects of conversation, always well supported, and always new, to prevent

her from yielding to this fatal sleep. Ah! should we not pardon the heart of woman the cruel regret which attaches to those days when she was beloved, when her existence was so necessary to that of another, when, at every moment, she was supported and protected? What isolation must succeed this season of delight! How happy are they whom the sacred hand of Hymen has conducted from love to friendship, without one painful moment having embittered their course!

Oswald and Corinna, after the uneasy passage of the marshes, arrived, at length, at Terracina, on the sea coast, near the confines of the city of Naples. It is there that the south truly begins; it is there that it receives travellers in all its magnificence. Naples, that happy country, is, as it were, separated from the rest of Europe, by the sea which surrounds it, and by that dangerous coun-

try which must be passed, in order to arrive at it. One would say, that nature, wishing to secure to herself this charming abode, has designedly made all access to it perilous. Rome is not quite in the south; we there have a foretaste of its sweets; but its enchantment only truly begins in the territory of Naples. Not far from Terracina is the promontory, fixed upon by the poets as the abode of Circe: and behind Terracina rises mount Anxur, where Theodoric, king of the Goths, had placed one of those strong castles, with which the northern warriors have covered the earth. There are few traces of the invasion of Italy, by the barbarians, or, at least, where those traces consist in devastation, they are confounded with the effects of time. The northern nations have not given to Italy that warlike aspect which Germany has preserved. It seems, that the gentle soil

of Ausonia was incompatible with that wood of fortifications and citadels with which the northern countries are planted. Rarely is a Gothic edifice, or a feudal tower, to be met with here; and the Roman antiquities reign alone triumphant over ages, and the nations by whom they have been conquered.

The whole mountain which presides over Terracina, is covered with orange and citron trees, which embalm the air in a delicious manner. There is nothing in our climate that resembles the southern perfume of citron-trees, which grow at large in the country; it produces on the imagination almost the same effect as melodious music; it gives a poetic disposition to the soul, stimulates genius, and intoxicates with the charms of nature. The aloës, and the large-leaved fig-trees, which are met here at every step, have a peculiar aspect, which brings to

mind all that we know of the productions of Africa. These plants inspire a sort of terror: they seem to belong to a violent and despotic land. The whole aspect of the country is foreign: we feel ourselves in another world, a world which is only known by the descriptions of the ancient poets, who have at the same time, in their descriptions, so much imagination, and so much exactness. On entering Terracina, the children threw into the carriage of Corinna, an immense quantity of flowers, which they gather by the side of the road, or on the mountain, and which they carelessly scatter about; such is their reliance on the prodigality of nature! The carts which bring home the harvest from the fields were every day ornamented with garlands of roses, and sometimes the children ornamented the cups they drank out of with flowers; for beneath such a climate the imagination of the lowest classes of

people becomes poetical. By the side of these smiling pictures, was seen and heard the sea, whose billows lashed the shore with fury. It was not agitated by the storm; but by the rocks which stand in habitual opposition to its waves, insulting their majesty.

E non udite ancor come risuona
Il roco ed alto fremito marino ?

This motion without aim, this strength without object, which is renewed throughout eternity, without our being able to discover either its cause, or its end, attracts us to the shore, where this grand spectacle offers itself to our sight, and to which we feel irresistibly and fearfully impelled.

Towards the evening, all was calm. Corinna and Lord Nelville walked into the country; they proceeded with a slow pace, silently enjoying the scene before them. Each step they took, in pressing the flowers, extorted from them their delicious

perfumes ; and the nightingales, reposing on the rose-trees, lent their charms unforced ; so that the purest harmony was united to the most delicious odours, while the mildness of the air was beyond expression. When we contemplate a fine spot in the north, the climate, in some degree, disturbs the pleasure which it inspires : those little sensations of cold and humidity, more or less distract your attention from what you behold ; but, in approaching Naples, you experience the friendly smiles of nature, so perfectly, and without alloy, that nothing abates the agreeable sensations which they cause you. All the relations of man in our climates are with society ; but nature, in hot countries, forms a connection with exterior objects. Not that the south has not also its melancholy. In what part of the earth does not human destiny produce this impression ? But there is in this melancholy neither discontent, anxiety, nor regret.

In other countries it is life which, such as it is, does not suffice the faculties of the soul; here the faculties of the soul do not suffice life, and the superabundance of sensation inspires a thoughtful indolence, which we can hardly account for when oppressed with it.

During the night, flies, of a shining hue, fill the air; one would say, that the mountain emitted sparks of fire, and that the burning earth had let loose some of its flames. These insects fly through the trees, sometimes repose on the leaves, and the wind blows them about, varying, in a thousand ways, their uncertain lights. The sand also contained a great number of little metallic stones, which sparkled on every side: it was the land of fire, still preserving in its bosom the traces of the sun, whose last rays had just warmed it. There is a life, and a repose, in this scenery, which entirely satisfies the various desires of human existence.

Corinna felt all the charms of this evening; nor could Oswald conceal the emotion they inspired—he frequently pressed Corinna to his heart. She felt no alarm, for such was her esteem for Oswald, that the utmost request of love on his part, would be considered by her, as a solemn vow to espouse her; but she saw him triumph over himself, and this conquest was an honor paid her. Whilst her heart felt that plenitude of happiness, and of love, which does not permit us to form another desire, Oswald was far from being so calm: he was fired with the charms of Corinna. Once he threw himself at her feet with violence, and seemed to have lost all empire over his passion; but Corinna regarded him with such an expression of sweetness and fear, she made him so sensible of his power, in beseeching him not to abuse it, that this humble

prohibition inspired him with more respect than any other could possibly have done.

They then perceived in the sea, the reflection of a torch, carried by some unknown hand who traversed the shore, repairing secretly to a neighbouring house.

“He is going to see the object of his love ;” said Oswald.—“ Yes,” answered Corinna.

“ And my happiness, for to-day, is about to end,”—resumed Oswald. At this moment the looks of Corinna were lifted towards heaven, and her eyes suffused with tears. Oswald, fearing that he had offended her, fell on his knees to intreat her forgiveness for that love which hurried him away.

“ No,” said Corinna, stretching forth her hand to him, and inviting him to return with her. “ No Oswald, I feel no alarm: you will respect her whom you love: you know that merely a request from you would be all-powerful with me ; it is, therefore, you who must be my security—you who would

for ever reject me as your bride, if you had rendered me unworthy of being so."

"Well," answered Oswald, "since you believe in this cruel empire of your will upon my heart, Corinna, whence arises your sadness?"—"Alas!" replied she,

"I was saying to myself, that the moments which I have just passed with you, were the happiest of my life, and as I turned my eyes in gratitude to heaven, I know not by what chance, a superstition of my childhood revived in my heart. The moon, which I contemplated, was covered with a cloud, and the aspect of that cloud was fatal. I have always found in the sky a countenance sometimes paternal and sometimes angry; and I tell you, Oswald, heaven has to-night condemned our love."—

"My dear," answered Lord Nelville, "the only augurs of the life of man, are his good or evil actions; and have

I not this very evening, immolated my most ardent desires on the altar of virtue?"—"Well, so much the better, if you are not included in this presage," replied Corinna; "it may be, that this angry sky has only threatened me."

CHAP. II.

THEY arrived at Naples by day, in the midst of that immense population, at once so animated and so indolent. They first traversed the street of Toledo, and saw the Lazzaroni, lying on the pavement, or in osier baskets, which serve them for lodging, day and night. There is something extremely original in this state of savage existence, mingled with civilization. There are, among these men, some who do not even know their own name, and who go to confess ano-

nymous sins ; not being able to tell who it is that has committed them. There is at Naples a subterranean grotto, where swarms of Lazzaroni pass their lives, only going out at noon to see the sun, and sleeping the rest of the day, whilst their wives spin. In climates, where food and raiment are so easy of attainment, it requires a very independent, and active government, to give sufficient emulation to a nation ; for it is so easy for the people merely to subsist at Naples, that they can dispense with that industry, which is necessary to procure a livelihood elsewhere. Laziness, and ignorance, combined with the volcanic air, which is breathed in this spot, ought to produce ferocity, when the passions are excited ; but this people is not worse than any other. They possess imagination, which might become the principle of disinterested actions, and give them a

bias for virtue, if their religious and political institutions were good.

Calabrians are seen marching in a body, to cultivate the earth, with a fiddler at their head, and stopping, from time to time, to *repose* themselves with dancing. There is every year, near Naples, a festival consecrated to the *madona of the grotto*, at which the girls dance to the sound of the tambourine, and the castanets, and it is not uncommon for a condition to be inserted in the marriage contract, that their husbands shall take them every year to this festival. There is on the stage at Naples, a performer eighty years old, who, since the age of sixty, has entertained the Neapolitans in their comic, national character of the Polichinello. Can we represent to ourselves, what the immortality of the soul is to a man, who thus employs his declining years? The people of Naples have no other

idea of happiness, than what consists in pleasure; but the love of pleasure is still better than a dry egotism.

It is true, that no people in the world are more fond of money than the Neapolitans: if you ask a man, of the lower class, in the street, to shew you your way, he stretches out his hand, after having made you a sign, for they are more indolent in speech, than in action; but their avidity for money is not methodical nor studied; they spend it as soon as they get it. They use it as savages would money, if it were introduced among them. But what this nation is most wanting in, is the sentiment of dignity. They perform generous, and benevolent actions, from a good heart, rather than from principle; for their theory in every respect is good for nothing, and opinion in this country has no stamina. But when men or women es-

cape this moral anarchy, their conduct is more remarkable in itself, and more worthy of admiration, than any where else, since there is nothing in exterior circumstances favourable to virtue. It is born entirely in the soul. Laws and manners, neither reward nor punish it. He who is virtuous, is so much the more heroic, for not being on that account either more considered, or more sought after.

With some honorable exceptions, the higher classes pretty nearly resemble the lower: the mind of the one is seldom more cultivated than that of the other, and knowledge, and practice of society, is the only external difference between them. But in the midst of this ignorance, there is such a natural intelligence in all ranks, that it is impossible to foresee what a nation like this might become, if all the energies of govern-

ment were directed to the advancement of knowledge and morality. As there is little instruction at Naples, we find there, hitherto, more originality of character than of mind. But the remarkable men of this country, it is said, such as the Abbé Galiani, Caraccioli, &c. possessed the highest degree of pleantry, joined to the most profound reflection,—rare powers of the mind!—an union without, which either pedantry, or frivolity, would hinder us from knowing the true value of things!

The Neapolitan people, in some respects, is not civilized at all; but their vulgarity does not at all resemble that of other nations. Their very rudeness interests the imagination. The African coast which borders the sea on the other side, is here almost felt, and there is something numidian in the savage cries which are heard in every part

of the city. Those brown visages, those vestments formed of red or violet stuff, whose deep colours attract the eye, even those very rags, in the arrangement of whose drapery this people display the taste of an artist, gives to the populace a picturesque appearance, whilst, in other countries, they exhibit nothing but the miseries of civilization. A certain taste for dress is often found in Naples, accompanied with an absolute want of necessary clothing. The shops are agreeably ornamented with flowers and fruit. Some have an appearance neither of plenty nor of public felicity, but only of a lively imagination; they seek, before every thing, to please the eye. The mildness of the climate, permits mechanics of every class to work in the streets. The tailors are seen making cloaths, and the victuallers providing their entertainments, and these

domestic occupations passing thus out of doors, multiply action in a thousand ways. Singing, dancing, and noisy sports, are very suitable to this spectacle; and there is no country where we feel, more clearly, the difference between amusement and happiness. In quitting the interior of the city, we arrive on the quays, whence we have a view of the sea, and of Mount Vesuvius, and forget then all that we know of man.

Oswald and Corinna arrived at Naples, whilst the eruption of Mount Vesuvius yet lasted. By day, nothing was seen but the black smoke which mixed with the clouds; but viewing it in the evening from the balconies of the houses, it excited an emotion entirely unexpected. A river of fire descends towards the sea, and its burning waves, like those of the watery tide, express a

rapid succession, and a continual and untired motion. One would say, that when nature transforms herself into various elements, she always preserves, nevertheless, some traces of a primitive and individual mind. The phenomenon of Vesuvius causes real palpitation. We are commonly so familiarised with exterior objects, that we hardly perceive their existence; and we scarcely ever feel a new emotion in the midst of prosaic countries; but that astonishment which the universe ought to cause, is suddenly renewed at the aspect of an unknown wonder of the creation: our whole being is shaken by this power of nature, in whose social combinations we have been so long absorbed; we feel that the greatest mysteries in this world do not all consist in man, and that he is threatened or protected by a force independent

of himself, in obedience to laws which he cannot penetrate. Oswald and Corinna proposed to ascend Mount Vesuvius, and the peril of this enterprize, gave an additional charm to a project which they were to execute together.

CHAP. III.

THERE was at that time, in the port of Naples, an English ship of war, in which divine service was performed every Sunday. The captain, and all the English who were at Naples, invited Lord Nelville to come the following day, which he promised, without thinking at first, whether he should take Corinna with him, and how he should present her to his fellow countrymen. He was tormented by this disquietude the whole night. As he was walking with Co-

rinna, on the following morning, near the port, and was about to advise her not to go on board, they saw an English shallop rowed by ten sailors, clad in white, and wearing a black velvet cap, on which was embroidered a silver leopard: a young officer landed from it, and accosting Corinna by the name of Lady Nelville, begged to have the honour of conducting her to the ship. At the name of Lady Nelville, Corinna was embarrassed—she blushed, and cast down her eyes. Oswald appeared to hesitate a moment: then, suddenly taking her hand, he said to her in English,—“Come, my dear,”—and she followed him.

The noise of the waves, and the silence of the sailors, who neither moved nor spoke, but in pursuance of their duty, and who rapidly conducted the bark over that sea which they had so often traversed,

gave birth to reverie. Besides, Corinna dared not question Lord Nelville on what had just passed. She sought to conjecture his intention, not thinking (which is however the most probable) that he had none, and that he yielded to each new circumstance. One moment she imagined that he was conducting her to divine service in order to espouse her, and this idea caused her at the time, more fear than happiness : it appeared to her that she was going to quit Italy and return to England, where she had suffered so much. The severity of manners and customs in that country, returned to her mind, and love itself, could not entirely triumph over the bitterness of her recollections. But how, in other circumstances, will she be astonished at those thoughts, fleeting as they were ! how will she abjure them !

Corinna ascended the ship, the interior

of which presented a picture of the most studied cleanliness and decorum. Nothing was heard but the voice of the captain, which was prolonged and repeated from one end to the other, by command and obedience. The subordination, regularity, silence, and serious deportment, remarkable in this ship, formed a system of social order, at the same time rigid and free, in contrast with the city of Naples, so volatile, so passionate, and tumultuous. Oswald was occupied with Corinna, and the impression she received; but his attention was sometimes diverted from her by the pleasure he felt in finding himself, in a manner, in his native country. In effect, does not an Englishman breathe his native air, when on board a ship in the midst of the sea? Oswald walked the deck with the English gentlemen, discussing the politics of their country; during which time, Corinna joined the

English ladies, who were come from Naples to assist at divine worship. They were surrounded by their children, as beautiful as the day, but timid as their mothers; and not a word was spoken before a new acquaintance. This constraint, this silence, rendered Corinna very sad; she turned her eyes towards Naples, towards its flowery shores, its animated existence, and sighed. Fortunately for her, Oswald did not perceive it; on the contrary, beholding her seated among English women, her dark eye-lids cast down like their fair ones, and conforming, in every respect, to their manners, he felt a sensation of joy. In vain does an Englishman find pleasure in foreign manners; his heart always reverts to the first impressions of his life. If you ask Englishmen, sailing at the extremity of the world, whither they are bound, they will answer you, *homeward*,

if they are returning to England. Their wishes, and their sentiments, are always turned towards their native country, at whatever distance they may be from it.

They descended between decks, to hear divine service; and Corinna soon perceived that her idea was without foundation, that Lord Nelville had not formed the solemn project she had at first supposed. She then reproached herself with having *feared* such an event, and the embarrassment of her present situation revived in her bosom; for all the company believed her to be the wife of Lord Nelville, and she had not the courage to say a word that might either destroy or confirm this idea. Oswald suffered as cruelly as she did; but, in the midst of a thousand rare qualities, there was much weakness and irresolution in his character. These defects are unperceived by their possessor, and assume, in his eyes, a new

form under every circumstance; he conceives it, occasionally, to be prudence, sensibility, or delicacy, which defers the moment of adopting a resolution, and prolongs a state of indecision; hardly ever does he feel that it is the same character which attaches this kind of inconvenience to every circumstance.

Corinna, however, notwithstanding the painful thoughts that occupied her, received a deep impression from the spectacle which she witnessed. Nothing, in effect, speaks more to the soul than divine service performed on board a ship; and the noble simplicity of the reformed worship seems particularly adapted to the sentiments which are then felt. A young man performed the functions of chaplain; he preached with a mild, but firm, voice, and his figure bespoke the rigid principles of a pure soul, amidst the ardour of youth. That severity carries with it an idea of

force, very suitable to a religion preached among the perils of war. At stated moments, the English minister delivered prayers, of which all the assembly repeated, with him, the last words. These confused, but mild, voices, proceeding from various distances, kept alive interest and emotion. The sailors, the officers, and the captain, knelt down several times, particularly at these words, "*Lord, have mercy upon us!*" The sword of the captain, which dragged on the floor whilst he was kneeling, called to mind that noble union of humility before God, and intrepidity against man, which renders the devotion of warriors so affecting; and whilst these brave people besought the God of armies, the sea was seen through the port-holes, and sometimes the murmuring of the waves, at that moment, seemed to say, "*your prayers are heard.*" The chaplain finished the service by a

prayer, peculiar to the English sailors. “*May God,*” say they, “*grant us the grace to defend our happy Constitution from without, and find, on our return, domestic happiness at home!*” How many fine sentiments are united in these simple words ! The previous and continued study which the navy requires, and the austere life led in a ship, make it a military cloister in the midst of the waves ; and the regularity of the most serious occupations is there only interrupted by perils and death. The sailors, in spite of their rough, hardy manners, often express themselves with much softness, and show a particular tenderness to women and children, when they meet them on board. We are the more touched with these sentiments, because we know with what *sang-froid* they expose themselves to those terrible dangers of war and the sea, in

the midst of which the presence of man is something supernatural.

Corinna and Lord Nelville returned to the boat which was to conduct them ashore; they beheld the city of Naples, built in the form of an amphitheatre, as if to assist, more commodiously, at the feast of nature; and Corinna, in setting her foot again upon Italian ground, could not refrain from feeling a sentiment of joy. If Nelville had suspected this sentiment, he would have been hurt at it, and perhaps with reason; yet he would have been unjust towards Corinna, who loved him passionately, in spite of the painful impression which the remembrance of a country, where cruel circumstances had rendered her so unhappy, caused her. Her imagination was lively; there was in her heart a great susceptibility of love; but talent, especially in a woman, begets a disposition to *ennui*, a

want of something to divert the attention, which the most profound passion cannot make entirely disappear. The idea of a monotonous life, even in the bosom of happiness, makes a mind, which stands in need of variety, to shudder with fear. It is only when there is little wind in the sails, that we can keep close to shore ; but the imagination roves at large, although sensibility be constant ; it is thus, at least, till the moment when misfortune makes every inconsistency disappear, and leaves but one only thought, and one only grief, in the mind.

Oswald attributed the reverie of Corinna only to the embarrassment into which she had been thrown by hearing herself called Lady Nelville ; and reproaching himself for not having released her from that embarrassment, he feared she might suspect him of levity. He began, therefore, in order to arrive at the

long-desired explanation, by offering to relate to her his own history. “I will speak first,” said he, “and your confidence will follow mine.” “Yes, undoubtedly it must,” answered Corinna, trembling; “but tell me at what day—at what hour?—When you have spoken, I will tell you all.”—“How you are agitated,” answered Oswald; “what, then, will you ever feel that fear of your friend, that mistrust of his heart?” “No,” continued Corinna; “it is decided; I have committed it all to writing, and, if you choose, to-morrow——” “To-morrow,” said Lord Nelville, “we are to go together to Vesuvius; I wish to contemplate, with you, this astonishing wonder, to learn from you how to admire it; and in this very journey I can summon resolution enough to make you acquainted with the particulars of my past life. My heart is determined; thus my confidence will

open the way to your's." "So you give me to-morrow," replied Corinna; "I thank you for this one day. Ah! who knows whther you will be for me the same, when I shall have opened my soul to you? And how can I feel such a doubt without shuddering?"

CHAP. IV.

THE ruins of Pompeia are on the same side of the sea as Mount Vesuvius, and Corinna and Lord Nelville began their excursion with these ruins. They were both silent ; for the moment approached which was to decide their fate, and that vague hope they had so long enjoyed, and which accords so well with the indolence and reverie that the climate of Italy inspires, was to be replaced by a positive destiny. They visited Pompeia together, the most curious ruin of antiquity. At Rome, seldom any

thing is found but the remains of public monuments, and these monuments only retrace the political history of past ages; but at Pompeia it is the private life of the ancients which offers itself to the view, such as it was. The Volcano, which has covered this city with ashes, has preserved it from the destroying hand of Time. Edifices, exposed to the air, never could have remained so perfect; but this hidden relic of antiquity was found entire. The paintings and statues were still in their pristine beauty; and every thing connected with domestic life is fearfully preserved. The amphoræ are yet prepared for the festival of the following day; the flour which was going to be kneaded is still to be seen; the remains of a woman, are still decorated with those ornaments which she wore on the holiday that the Volcano disturbed, and her calcined arm no longer holds the bracelet of precious stones which

still surrounds it. No where is to be seen so striking an image of the sudden interruption of life. The traces of the wheels are visible in the streets, and the stones on the brink of the wells bear the mark of the cord which has gradually furrowed them. Still are to be seen, on the walls of a guard-house, those misshapen characters, those figures rudely sketched, which the soldiers traced to divert Time, who was hastily advancing to swallow them up.

When we place ourselves in the midst of the crossing from which the city, that remains standing entirely, is seen on all sides, it seems to us as if we were waiting for somebody, as if its master were coming; and even the appearance of life, which this abode offers, only makes us feel more sadly its eternal silence. It is with petrified lava that the greater part of these houses are built, which are now swallowed up by other lava. Thus are heaped ruins upon ruins,

and tombs upon tombs. This history of the world, whose epochs are marked by different ruins, this picture of human life, which is only enlightened by the Volcanoes that have consumed it, fills the heart with a profound melancholy. How long man has existed ! How long he has suffered and died ! Where can we find his sentiments and his thoughts ? Is the air that we breathe in these ruins impregnated with them, or are they for ever deposited in the immortal skies ? Some burnt leaves of manuscripts, which have been found at Herculaneum, and Pompeia, and which the literati at Portici are employed to decypher, are all that remain to give us information of those unhappy victims, whom the Volcano, the thunderbolt of the earth, has destroyed. But in passing near those ashes, which art has succeeded in reanimating, we are afraid to respire, lest our breath should carry away that dust where noble ideas are perhaps still imprinted.

The public edifices in this very city of Pompeia, which was one of the least extensive in Italy, are yet tolerably fine. The luxury of the ancients had almost ever some object of public interest for its aim. Their private houses are very small, and we do not see in them any studied magnificence, though we may remark a lively taste for the fine arts in their possessors. Almost the whole interior is adorned with the most agreeable paintings, and mosaic pavements, ingeniously worked. On many of these pavements, towards the threshold of the door, is written the word "Salutation" (*Salve.*) This word must not be simply considered as a polite expression, but as an invocation of hospitality. The rooms are singularly narrow, and badly lighted; the windows not looking on the street, but on a portico inside the house, as well as a marble court that surrounds it. In the midst of this court is a cistern, simply ornamented.

It is evident, from this kind of habitation, that the ancients lived almost entirely in the open air, and that it was there they received their friends. Nothing gives us a more soft and voluptuous idea of existence than this climate, which intimately unites man with nature ; we should suppose that the character of their conversation, and their society, ought, with such habits, to be different from those of a country where the rigour of the cold forces the inhabitants to shut themselves up in their houses. We better comprehend the Dialogues of Plato, in contemplating those porches, under which the ancients walked during one half of the day. They were incessantly animated by the spectacle of a fine sky : social order, according to their conceptions, was not the dry combination of precaution and strength, but a happy assemblage of institutions, which stimulated the faculties, unfolded the soul and directed man to the perfection of himself and his equals.

Antiquity inspires an insatiable curiosity. Those men of erudition who are occupied only in forming a collection of names, which they call history, are certainly divested of all imagination. But to penetrate the remotest periods of the past, to interrogate the human heart through the intervening gloom of ages, to seize a fact by the help of a word, and by the aid of that fact to discover the character and manners of a nation; in effect, to revert to the remotest time, to figure to ourselves how the earth, in its first youth, appeared to the eyes of man, and in what manner the human race then supported the boon of existence, which civilization has now rendered so complicate, is a continual effort of the imagination, which divines and discovers the finest secrets that reflection and study can reveal to us. This occupation of the mind, Oswald found most fascinating, and often repeated to Corinna, that if he

had not been taken up with the noblest interests in his own country, he could only have found life supportable in those parts, where the monuments of history supply the place of present existence. We must at least regret glory when it is no longer possible to obtain it. It is only forgetfulness that debases the soul; but it may find an asylum in the past, when dry circumstances deprive actions of their aim.

On leaving Pompeia, and returning to Portici, Corinna and Lord Nelville were surrounded by the inhabitants, who cried to them, loudly, to come and see *the mountain*; so they call *Vesuvius*. Is it necessary to name it? It is the glory of the Neapolitans, and the object of their patriotic feelings; their country is distinguished by this phenomenon. Oswald had Corinna carried in a kind of palanquin, as far as the hermitage of St. Salvador, which is half way up the mountain; and where travellers

repose, before they undertake to climb the summit. He rode by her side, to watch those who carried her, and the more his heart was filled with the generous thoughts that nature and history inspire, the more he adored Corinna.

At the foot of Vesuvius, the country is the most fertile, and best cultivated, that can be found in the kingdom of Naples, that is to say, in the country of Europe most favoured of heaven. The celebrated vine, whose wine is called *Lacryma Christi*, grows in this spot, and by the side of lands which have been laid waste by the lava. One would say, that nature has made a last effort in this spot, so near the volcano, and has decked herself in her richest attire before her death. In proportion as we ascend the mountain, we discover, in turning about, Naples, and the fine country that surrounds it. The rays of the sun make the sea sparkle, as if strewed with

precious stones ; but all the splendor of the creation is extinguished by degrees, as we approach the land of ashes and smoke which announces the vicinity of the Volcano. The lava of preceding years, which partakes of the nature of iron, has traced in the earth deep and sable furrows, and all around them is barren. At a certain height, not a bird is seen to fly, at another, plants become very scarce, then, even, the insects find nothing to subsist on in the arid soil. At length, every living thing disappears ; you enter the empire of death, and the pulverised ashes alone roll beneath your tottering feet.

Ne griggi nè armenti
Guida bifolco mai guida pastore

Never does the shepherd, or the pastor, conduct to this spot his flocks or his herds.

Here dwells a hermit on the confines

of life and death. A tree, the last relic of vegetation, grows before his door ; and it is beneath the shadow of its pale foliage, that travellers are accustomed to wait the approach of night, to continue their route ; for, during the day, the fires of Vesuvius are only perceived like a cloud of smoke, and the lava, so bright and burning, appears black before the beams of the sun. This metamorphosis itself is a fine spectacle, which renews, every evening, that astonishment which the continuity of the same aspect might weaken. The impression of this spot, and its profound solitude, gave Lord Neville more resolution to reveal the secrets of his soul ; and, desiring to excite the confidence of Corinna, he said to her, with the most lively emotion :—“ You wish to read the inmost soul of your unhappy friend ; well, I will tell you all :

my wounds are about to bleed afresh—I feel it; but ought we, in this desolate scene of nature, to dread those sufferings which Time brings in its course.

BOOK XII.



The history of Lord Nelville.

CHAP. I.

“ I WAS brought up in my father’s house, with a tenderness and affection which has increased in my admiration since I have become more acquainted with mankind. Never have I loved any object as I loved my father; and yet, methinks, had I known as I do now, how uncommon is such a character as his in the world, I should have loved him with still more warmth and devotion. I recollect a thousand traits of his life, which appeared to me

simple, because my father thought them so; but which painfully affect me now that I know their value. The reproaches we make ourselves with regard to a person who was dear to us, and who is no more, give an idea of what eternal torments would be if not mitigated by Divine Mercy.

“ I felt happiness and tranquillity with my father; but I wished to travel, before I entered the army. There is in my country the finest civil career for men of eloquence; but I had, and still have, so great a degree of timidity, that it would be painful to me to speak in public; I therefore chose a military life. I would rather encounter certain peril than possible disgust. My self-love is, in every respect, more susceptible than ambitious, and I have always found that men appear to the imagination phantoms when they blame, and pigmies when they praise you. I

felt a desire to go to France, where that revolution had just broken out, which, notwithstanding the age of mankind, pretended to begin anew the history of the world. My father entertained an antipathy to Paris, which he had seen towards the end of the Reign of Louis XV. and could not conceive how clubs could be formed into a nation, pretensions into virtues, and vanity into enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he consented to the journey which I desired, because he did not like to thwart me, when duty did not call for a rigid exercise of his paternal authority. He always feared that that authority might allay the purity of affection which depends upon all that is most free and involuntary in our nature; and, before all, he wished to be beloved by his son. He therefore, at the beginning of 1791, when I had attained one and twenty years of age, granted me per-

mission to sojourn in France for six months, and I set out to study that nation, so near to, yet so different from, our own, by its institutions, and the habits which result from them.

“ I thought I should never be able to love this country ; I felt those prejudices against it which the pride and gravity of Englishmen inspire. I dreaded finding all the emotions of the heart assailed by raillery. I detested the art of checking all the flights of the soul, and stripping love of all its enchantment. Their gaiety appeared to me very sad at bottom ; because it gave a deadly blow to all my dearest sentiments. I was not then acquainted with Frenchmen, of a truly distinguished character, those who unite with the most noble qualities, manners full of charms. I was astonished at the simplicity of that liberty which reigned in the society of Paris. The greatest

interests were treated as well without frivolity as without pedantry; the most profound ideas seemed to have become the patrimony of conversation, and the revolution of all Europe seemed to have taken place only to render Paris more amiable. I met there with men of most serious information, and most serious talents, animated by the desire of pleasing still more than by that of being useful; seeking the suffrages of a drawing room after receiving those of a senate, and courting the society of ladies, more to be applauded than to be beloved.

“ Every thing at Paris was perfectly well combined with regard to external happiness; there was no restraint in the details of life; there was egotism at bottom, but none in exterior forms; a motion, an interest which occupied every day of your life without leaving you much fruit from it, but which prevented

it from hanging heavily on your hands. There was a promptitude of conception, which enabled men to indicate and comprehend, by a single word, what elsewhere would have required a long developement. There was a spirit of imitation which, though it stood in the way of real independence, introduced into conversation that sort of harmony and complaisance which was to be found no where else. To conclude, there was an easy manner of conducting life, of diversifying it, and of abstracting it from reflection without stripping it of intellectual charms. To all these methods of passing away time, add, the spectacles, the foreigners, and the news, and you will have an idea of the most social city in the world. I feel astonished when I pronounce its name, in this hermitage, in the midst of a desert, at the opposite extreme of those impressions which the most active population in

the world gave birth to ; but it is necessary that I should paint to you its effect upon me.

“ Would you believe it, Corinna, such as you have known me, so melancholy and so dejected, that I let myself be seduced within this vortex ! I was glad to be without a moment of *ennui*, though, at the same time, without one of meditation, and to blunt the faculty of suffering, though by the same means I destroyed the keen sensibility of love. If I may judge by myself, it appears to me that a man of serious cast may be fatigued, even by the intenseness of his own impressions : he always returns to his original character ; but that which has led him astray, is pleasing for a time. It is in raising me above myself, Corinna, that you dissipate my natural melancholy : it was in reducing me beneath my own character, that a wo-

man of whom I shall presently speak, lulled asleep my internal sadness. However, although I had acquired the taste and habit of a Parisian life, it could not have sufficed me long, had I not obtained the friendship of a man who was a perfect model of the French character, in its ancient loyalty, and of the French mind, in its recent cultivation.

“ I shall not tell you, my dear, the real name of those whom I shall speak of; but you will comprehend what obliges me to conceal them from you, in learning the remainder of this history. Count Raymond was of the most illustrious family in France, his soul possessed all the romantic boldness of his ancestors, and his reason adopted philosophical ideas, when they demanded personal sacrifices of him. He had not taken an active part in the revolution, but he loved all that was virtuous on both sides:

the courage of gratitude on the one hand, and the love of liberty on the other: he was pleased with all that was disinterested. The cause of the oppressed seemed to him just; and this generosity of character appeared to greater advantage from the little value he appeared to set upon his own life. It was not that he was exactly wretched; but there was such a contrast between his soul and society, such as it generally is, that the daily uneasiness he felt detached him from himself. I was happy enough to interest Count Raymond; he wished to overcome my natural reserve; and to conquer it, he made use of a coquetry of friendship truly romantic: he knew no obstacle either to rendering me the greatest service, or to affording me the smallest pleasure. He would live half the year in England not to lose my society; and it was with difficulty that I

could prevent his sharing with me all he possessed.

“ ‘ I have but one sister,’ said he to me, ‘ married to a rich old man; and I am perfectly free to do what I please with my fortune. Besides, this revolution will turn out badly, and I may possibly be killed; allow me, therefore, to enjoy what I possess, by considering it as your own.’ Alas! the generous Raymond foresaw his future destiny with too fatal a certainty. When capable of knowing ourselves, we are rarely deceived with respect to our future lot, and presentiment is frequently no more than a judgment of ourselves which we do not yet avow. Noble, sincere, and even imprudent, Count Raymond exposed his inward soul; the acquaintance of such a character was for me a new pleasure, and it is its scarcity that leads us to mistrust external appearances. But the ex-

pansive goodness which I found in my friend, gave me at once enjoyments easy and sure, and I did not in the least suspect his qualities, though they were all displayed from the first moment of his acquaintance. I felt no timidity in my intercourse with him, and, what was still better, he made me feel easy in myself. Such was the amiable Frenchman for whom I felt that perfect friendship, that soldier-like fraternity, which we are only capable of in our youth, before we are alive to feelings of rivalry, before irrevocable courses, furrow and divide the field of futurity.

“One day, Count Raymond said to me, ‘My sister is a widow. I did not like her marriage with that rich old fellow, and although, at the time it took place, we were both of us poor—for my fortune only arises from an inheritance which has lately come to me—I opposed the

match with all my might: I do not like that people should do any thing from cold, interested calculation, much less the most solemn action of life. However, it was an action that could not injure her in the eyes of the world; indeed, she has conducted herself extremely well with a husband whom she did not like; and now that she is free, she is coming to live with me again. You shall see her; she has a very pleasing exterior, and you Englishmen are fond of making discoveries; for my part, I like to read a person's whole character in his physiognomy at once; your reserved manners, however, my dear Oswald, give me no pain; but I must say I am a little perplexed at those of my sister.'

“Madame d'Arbigny, the sister of Count Raymond, arrived the next morning, and on the following evening I was presented to her. Her features resembled

those of her brother; the sound of her voice was analogous, but her pronunciation quite different; and there was a great deal more subtlety and reserve in the expression of her look. Her figure was very agreeable, her form graceful, and there was a perfect elegance in all her motions. She never spoke a word that was not to the purpose; she was not wanting in the least attentions of society, without her politeness being exaggerated; she flattered the self-love of others with much address, and shewed herself pleased with another without exposing her private feelings; for in every thing that pertained to sensibility, she always expressed herself as if she wished to conceal from others what was passing in her heart. Her manners had, with me, a seductive charm, from the apparent resemblance they bore to those of the females of my own country? It to be

sure, did appear to me, that Madame d'Arbigny betrayed too often that which she feigned a wish to conceal, and that chance never afforded so many involuntary occasions of emotion as appeared to grow around her. But this reflection lightly crossed my mind, and what I habitually experienced in the company of Madame d'Arbigny was to me sweet and new.

“Hitherto I had never been captivated by any female. In our country, the tender passion, and all the enthusiasm that it inspires, is deeply felt; but the science of working into the heart by self-love is little known; besides, I had just quitted the University, and no English woman had honored me with her attention. Madame d'Arbigny enhanced every word that I said; she devoted herself to me with constant attention; I do not believe that she really knew my whole character;

but she made me pleased with myself by a thousand trifling observations, whose sagacity confounded me. It appeared to me, sometimes, that there was a little art in her speech; that she spoke with too soft a voice, and that her phrases were too carefully chosen; but the resemblance she bore her brother, the most ingenuous of mankind, removed these suspicions from my mind, and contributed to inspire me with attachment for her.

“One day I informed Count Raymond of the effect which this resemblance produced on me; he thanked me for it; but, after a moment’s reflection, he said to me,—‘My sister and I, however, are not alike in character.’—After these words he was silent; but the recollection of them, in after-circumstances, has convinced me he did not desire that I should espouse his sister. I cannot doubt that her wish was different from

his even at that time, though this wish was not then so decidedly manifested as it was afterwards. We passed all our time together, and my days glided away in her company often agreeably, but always without pain. I have since reflected that she was habitually of my opinion; when I began a phrase, she finished it, or anticipated what I was going to utter, and conformed to it. Nevertheless, in spite of this perfect mildness in form, she, in reality, exercised a very despotic empire over my actions. She had a way of saying to me: ‘Surely you will do so; surely you will not act in such a manner,’ that entirely governed me. I feared that I should lose her esteem, if I deceived her expectations, and attached a value to that esteem of which I so often received flattering proofs.

“However, Corinna you may believe me, for it was my opinion before I saw you,

the sentiment that Madame d'Arbigny inspired me with was not love.—I had never expressed an affection for her.—I knew not whether so fine a lady would meet my father's wishes, as a match for his son;—a French woman was certainly not very likely to suit him, and I wished to do nothing without his sanction. My silence, I believe, was displeasing to Madame d'Arbigny : she sometimes appeared out of humour, and sad; and this she explained afterwards as proceeding from a very tender cause; notwithstanding her physiognomy, in some unguarded moment,—betrayed considerable apathy; but this inconsistency I attributed to the relation in which we stood to each other, and with which I was satisfied myself, for it is painful to feel a little love without giving up our whole soul to that passion.

“Neither Count Raymond nor my-

self ever spoke of his sister : It was the first restraint that had ever existed betwixt us ; but several times, Madame d'Arbigny had conjured me not to discourse about her to her brother ; and when I expressed my astonishment at this request, she said to me : ' I know not whether you feel like me ; but I cannot bear a third, not even my most intimate friend, to interfere with my sentiments for another.—I love secrecy, in all the affections. I was tolerably pleased with this explanation, and complied with her wishes. I at that time, received a letter from my father, desiring my return to Scotland. The six months allotted for my stay in France were elapsed, and the troubles of that country increasing every day, he did not think it safe for a foreigner to remain there any longer. This letter gave me at first the most lively pain. I felt however how much my father was in the

right—I had a great desire to see him again ; but the life which I led at Paris, in the society of Count Raymond, and his sister, was so agreeable to me, that I could not tear myself from them without the most bitter chagrin. I went directly to Madame d'Arbigny, I shewed her my letter, and whilst she was reading it, I was too much absorbed in my own feelings to observe the impression it produced upon her. I only heard some words which she said to prevail upon me to retard my departure, and to write to my father that I was ill. I was about to reply, by telling her what was the fact, that my departure was determined upon for the morrow, when Count Raymond entered, and, upon understanding the subject of our conversation, declared immediately, there was no hesitation, but that I ought to obey my father. I was astonished at so prompt a

decision on his part; I expected to be importuned to stay; I wished to resist my regret, but did not think the triumph would be rendered so easy to me, and, for a moment, I misconceived my friend. He perceived this, and taking me by the hand, said—‘In three months, I shall be in England, why then should I detain you in France? I have my reasons for not doing so,’ added he in a low voice. But his sister heard him, and said directly that, in effect, it was prudent to avoid the dangers to which an Englishman might be exposed in France, in the midst of the revolution. I am very sure now that it was not to that the Count alluded; but, he neither contradicted, nor confirmed his sister’s explanation. I was to depart, he therefore did not think it necessary to say anything more to me on the subject.

“ ‘ Could I be useful to my native

country, I would stay,' continued he; 'but this is no longer France. The ideas and sentiments which made it beloved, exist no longer. I shall still regret the soil; but I shall find my native country again, when I breathe the same air as you.'—How was I moved at these affecting expressions of a friendship so genuine! How much was Raymond, at that moment, above his sister in my love! She soon discovered it, and that very evening I saw her in a new point of view. Some visitors arrived; she did the honors of her house to admiration, and spoke of my departure with the greatest indifference, as if it were to her no more than any common event. I had already remarked, upon several occasions, that she set such a value on the consideration of the world, as never to let any body know her sentiments of me; but this time it was too much, and so wounded was I

by her indifference, that I determined to take my leave directly. She saw me approach the Count to request that I might see him on the morrow before my departure; when she came to me, and said, loud enough to be heard by all present, that she had a letter to give me for one of her friends in England; then added quickly, in a low voice—‘It is only my brother then, that you regret to leave, and you would pierce my heart, by quitting me in this manner?’ She then returned and took her seat in the midst of the circle. I was troubled at her words, and was about to stay as she desired me, when Count Raymond took me by the arm, and conducted me to his room.

“When all the company was gone, we heard Madame d’Arbigny’s bell ring violently—the Count paid no attention to it; I forced him, however, to send and see what was the matter, when a

servant brought us word that her mistress was suddenly taken ill. I was greatly alarmed, and wished to see her once more before my departure; but the Count obstinately opposed it.—‘Let us shun these fits,’ said he; ‘the women always console themselves best when left alone.’—I could not comprehend this unfeeling conduct, so much in contrast with the kind-heartedness of my friend, and I left him the next day, with a sort of embarrassment, which rendered our parting less tender. Ah! if I had known that sentiment, so full of delicacy, which prevented his consenting to my being captivated by his sister, whom he did not think formed to make me happy; if, above all, I had foreseen what events were about to separate us for ever, my parting expressions would have been grateful to his soul, and to mine.”

CHAP. II.

OSWALD left off speaking for some moments, and Corinna had devoured his recital with so much avidity, that she remained silent too, for fear of interrupting him, when he should resume his narrative.—“I should have been happy,” continued he, “had my connection with Madame d’Arbigny finished here; had I remained with my father, and never set foot in France again! But the fatality, or perhaps the weakness, of my character

has for ever poisoned my life.—Yes, for ever, my love! even with you.

“ I passed near a twelvemonth in Scotland with my father, and our mutual tenderness became every day more intimate; I penetrated the sanctuary of that celestial soul, and I found in the friendship which united me to him, those sympathies of blood whose mysterious ties attach to our whole existence. I received letters from Raymond, full of affection; he related to me the difficulties he felt to convert his fortune into specie, in order to join me in England; but his perseverance in this project was the same. I still loved him; but what friend could I compare to my father? The respect with which he inspired me, did not restrain my confidence. I put faith in the words of my father as in an oracle; and that uncertainty in my character, which is so unhappy to its pos-

essor, always ceased when he had spoken. “*Heaven has formed us,*” said an English writer, “*for the love of what is venerable.*” My father did not know, he could not know to what a degree I loved him; and my fatal conduct must have made him doubt it. Nevertheless, he pitied me, he pitied me in dying, for the grief which his death would cause me. Ah! Corinna, I advance in this melancholy recital, support my courage, I have need of it!”—“My dear,” said Corinna, “is it not sweet to reveal your soul, so noble and so full of sensibility, to her who, of all the world, admires and loves you the most?”

“He sent me to transact some business for him in London,” resumed Lord Neville, “and I departed never to behold him again: yet no secret horror warned me of my misfortune. He appeared to me more amiable than ever in our last conver-

sations ; one would say, that the souls of the just, like the flowers, yield a more sweet perfume towards the evening. He embraced me, with tears in his eyes ; he often said to me, that at his time of life all was solemn ; but such an understanding subsisted between our minds, that I thought not of the difference of our ages. Confidence, like fear, is inexplicable in ardent affections. My father accompanied me on this occasion, to the threshold of the Castle, of that Castle which I have since beheld desert and waste as my own heart.

“ I had not been eight days in London, when I received from Madame d'Arbigny, that fatal letter, every word of which is engraven in my memory ; ‘ Yesterday, the tenth of August,’ said she, ‘ my brother was massacred at the Thuilleries, in defending his king. I, as his sister, am proscribed, and obliged to hide myself

from my persecutors. The Count had united my fortune to his, in order to transmit it to England: have you received it yet? Or do you know to whom he has entrusted it to be conveyed to you? I have only received one line from him, written at the Castle, the moment it was about to be attacked, and by this line, I am directed to apply to you for every information. Could you come over to fetch me, you would, perhaps, save my life for the English still travel freely in France; but I cannot obtain a passport—the name of my brother renders me suspected. If you are sufficiently interested in the wretched sister of Raymond, to come in search of her, you will learn of M. de Maltigues, my relation at Paris, the place of my retreat. But if you conceive the generous intention of succouring me, do not lose an instant to accomplish it, for war is expected to

break out every day between the two countries.'

“Figure to yourself the effect which this letter produced on me. My friend massacred, his sister in despair, and their fortune, as she said, in my hands, though I had not received the least intimation of it. Add to these circumstances, the danger of Madame d'Arbigny, and the idea she had, that I might save her by going to fetch her over. I thought it impossible to hesitate, and I set out directly, sending a courier to my father, with the letter I had just received, and a promise, that I would return in a fortnight! By a cruel chance, the man, whom I sent, fell ill upon the road, and my second letter, which I wrote to my father, from Dover, came to hand before the first. By this means he knew of my departure, without being acquainted with the motives of it, and when the explanation reached him, he was in a state of

alarm, at this journey, which was not to be dissipated.

“ I arrived at Paris in three days, where I learnt that Madame d'Arbigny had retired to a provincial town, at sixty leagues distance, and I continued my route to join her there. We both felt a profound emotion, at seeing each other again : she appeared more amiable in her adversity, than before ; because there was less of art and restraint in her manners. We wept together for her noble brother, and those public disasters which had caused his death. I questioned her with anxiety, upon the subject of her fortune—she told me she had heard no account of it ; but a few days afterwards I learnt that the banker in whose hands the Count deposited it, had restored it to her, and, what is singular, I received my information from a merchant of the town in which we lived, who told it me by chance, and assured me that

Madame d'Arbigny, had never any reason to be uneasy on that subject. This was to me incomprehensible, and I went to Madame d'Arbigny to ask of her an explanation. I found M. de Maltigues one of her relations, with her, who told me with a remarkable promptitude, and sang-froid, that he had that moment arrived from Paris, to bring Madame d'A. news of the bankers return, whom she believed to have been gone to England, and of whom she had heard nothing for a whole month. Madame d'Arbigny confirmed what he said, and I believed it; but in recollecting that she constantly found pretexts to avoid shewing me the pretended note of her brother, which she had mentioned in her letter, I have since comprehended that she made use of an artifice to alarm me on the subject of her fortune.

“ It is, at least, true that she was rich, and that there was nothing interested in

her desire to espouse me; but the great fault of Madame d'Arbigny was, to convert sentiment into an enterprise, to shew address where it would be sufficient to love, and incessantly to use dissimulation when it would be better to appear simply natural. For she loved me as much as it is possible to love, when we conduct the affections of the heart like political intrigues.

“ The sadness of Madame d'Arbigny added to her exterior charms, and gave an expression to her countenance that pleased me greatly. I had formally declared to her, that I would not marry without my father's consent; but I could not refrain from expressing the transports she excited in me; and as it was her project to captivate my heart, at all events, I thought I perceived that she was not invariably determined to repel my desires, and, now that I look back on what has

passed between us, it seems to me, that she hesitated from motives, foreign to love, and that her apparent conflicts were secret deliberations. I found myself alone with her the whole day; in spite of those resolutions with which delicacy inspired me, I could not resist the tide of passion, and Madame d'Arbigny made me her slave, by submitting herself entirely to my power. She testified more grief and remorse than perhaps she really felt, and bound me to her destiny even by her repentance. I wished to take her to England with me, introduce her to my father, and intreat him to consent to our union; but she refused to leave France without being my wife. Perhaps she was in the right for so doing; but knowing all the time that I could not determine to marry her, without my father's consent, she erred in the means she took to avoid leaving France,

and to retain me in spite of the duties that recalled me to England.

“ When war was declared between the two countries, my desire of quitting France became more strong, and the obstacles that Madame d’Arbigny opposed to it, were multiplied. At one time she could not obtain a passport ; at another she assured me that by going alone, I should compromise her character in France, after my departure, as she would be suspected of maintaining a correspondence with me. This woman, so gentle and so deliberate, would occasionally indulge in fits of despair, that threw my whole soul into disorder. She employed the attractions of her figure, and the graces of her mind, to please, and her grief to intimidate me.

“ Perhaps the women are in the wrong to govern with their tears, and thus to subject manly resolution to their weakness. But when they do not fear to employ this

weapon, it always succeeds, at least for a time. Undoubtedly love is weakened, even by the empire which it usurps over a man; and the power of grief, too frequently exercised, freezes the imagination. But there was at that time, in France, a thousand occasions to excite interest and pity. The health of Madam d'A. appeared every day on the decline; and illness is, for woman, a formidable instrument of power. Those who have not, like you, Corinna, a just confidence in their own mind and soul, or those who are not like our English women, so proud and so timid that dissimulation is impossible to them, have recourse to art in order to inspire tenderness, and the best we can then hope of them is, that the motive of their dissimulation may be a real affection.

“ A third party became, without my knowledge, interested in my connection with Madame d'Arbigny; it was M. de Mal-

tigues, who was captivated with my mistress, and desired to espouse her. But a studied immorality rendered his heart completely callous; he was fond of intrigue, even when not interested in the object of it, and seconded Madame d'A. in her desire of an union with me, ready to defeat this project, whenever the occasion of serving his own presented itself. He was a man for whom I had a singular aversion: though he had hardly attained the age of twenty, there was a remarkable apathy in his exterior deportment. In England, where we are accused of such coldness in our manners, I never saw anything like his serious carriage, when he entered a room. I should never have taken him for a Frenchman, had he not possessed a vein of pleasantry, and an itch for talking very singular in a man who seemed indifferent to every topic of life, and who appeared to reduce this disposition to a system. He

pretended to have been born with much sensibility and enthusiasm, but that the knowledge of mankind, which he had acquired, during the French Revolution, had undeceived him. He had perceived, as he said, that there was nothing estimable in the world but fortune or power, or both; and that friendships, in general, ought to be considered as habits to be put off, or resumed, according to circumstances. He was tolerably clever in the application of this opinion; he only committed one fault—that was to tell it; but though he was not like the Frenchmen of former days, desirous of pleasing, he was still anxious to make a figure in conversation, which rendered him very imprudent. Very different was Madame d'Arbigny, who sought the attainment of her object, but who did not betray herself like M. de Maltigues, by aiming to shine even in immorality itself. What was most strange in these two persons

was, that the woman of sensibility knew how to keep her secret, whilst the man of apathy could not command his tongue.

“ Such as he was, however, M. de Maltigues had a singular ascendancy over Madame d'Arbigny; he either discovered her soul, or she made him her confidant. This woman, so accustomed to dissimulation, was perhaps obliged to commit an imprudence now and then by way of breathing; at least, it is certain that whenever M. de Maltigues gave her an unkind look, she appeared troubled; if he put on an angry frown, she rose to take him aside; if he went out in a pet, she went to her closet almost that very instant, to write to him. I accounted for this ascendancy of M. de Maltigues over Madame D'Arbigny, from his having known her from her infancy, and had the management of her affairs since

she had been left with no nearer relation than he. But the principal motive of Madame d'Arbigny's humouring M. de Maltigues was, the project she had formed, and which I learnt too late, of espousing him if I were to leave her; for she did not wish on any account to pass for a forsaken woman. Such a resolution must induce a belief that she did not love me; and yet she had no reason to prefer me but her passion. But, during her whole life, she united prudence with levity, and the artificial views of society with the natural affections. She wept sometimes when she was affected; but she wept also at others, because it became her so to do. She was happy in being beloved, not only because she loved in return, but because it was an honour to her in the eyes of the world. She had good sentiments when she was alone; but she could derive no pleasure from

them if they could not be made subservient to her self-love, or her desires. She was a female, formed by and for good company, possessing that art of managing the truth, which is found so often in countries, where the desire of producing effect by our sentiments is stronger, than the sentiments themselves.

“ I had not heard from my father for some time, because the war had interrupted our correspondence. At length, he found an opportunity of sending a letter that reached me, and in which he conjured me, by my own duty, and his tenderness, to quit France, declaring to me, in the most solemn manner, that if I espoused Madame d'Arbigny, it would bring him to the grave. He intreated me, at least, to return free to England, and not to determine my future fate, till I had heard him on the subject. I answered this letter directly, in giving him my

word of honor that I would not marry without his consent, and that in a short time I would be with him. Madame d'Arbigny employed first intreaty, and then despair, to retain me; when, finding that she did not succeed by these means, she had recourse to stratagem; but how could I then suspect it?

“ One morning she came to me, her countenance blanched with fear, her hair dishevelled, and threw herself into my arms, beseeching me to protect her. She seemed ready to expire with terror. Hardly could I comprehend, from her unconnected phrases, that a warrant was come to arrest her, as the sister of Count Raymond, and that I must find an asylum, to hide her from her pursuers. Even at this epoch, women had been sacrificed to revolutionary rage; and her terror appeared perfectly natural. I conducted her to a merchant, who was devoted to

my interests, and placed her under his protection: I conceived she would be there perfectly safe, and only M. de Maltigues and myself were acquainted with the secret of her retreat. How could I avoid, in this situation, being warmly interested in a woman's fate? How could I leave a proscribed female? On what day—at what hour, could I say to her:—‘ You have relied upon my support, and I withdraw it from you?’—However, the remembrance of my father pursued me incessantly, and, upon several occasions, I essayed to obtain Madame d’Arbigny’s permission to depart alone; but she threatened to give herself up to her assassins, if I quitted her, and went out twice in the open street, with a desperation that penetrated me with grief and fear. I followed her in the street, conjuring her in vain to return. Luckily, either by chance or design, we

each time met M. de Maltigues, and he conducted her back in representing to her the imprudence of her conduct; but I blushed at being in France in the midst of the frightful events that passed there, and at a time when my country was at war with the French."

"M. de Maltigues, often mocked my scruples; but, witty as he was, he did not perceive, or he did not take the trouble to observe, the effect of his pleasantries; for they awakened in me all the sentiments which he wished to extinguish. Madame d'Arbigny easily remarked the impression I received; but she had no empire over M. de Maltigues, who acted mostly from caprice. In order to interest my feelings, she had recourse to her grief, natural and exaggerated. She employed her weak state of health as much to please as to move me; for she was never more attractive than when she

fainted at my feet. She knew how to set off her beauty, as well as the rest of her charms, and even her external graces were dexterously combined with her emotions, in order to captivate me.

“ I lived in this state always agitated, always uncertain, trembling when I received a letter from my father, more wretched still, when I received none ; retained by the captivating power of Madame d'Arbigny, and especially by the fear of driving her to despair ; for by a strange inconsistency, she was of the gentlest manners, of the most equal temper, and cheerful disposition, in the general habits of life, and, nevertheless, the most violent in a scene. She wished to rule, by conferring happiness, and inspiring fear, thus converting her natural disposition into a stratagem. One day, it was in the month of September, 1793, having been more than a year in France,

I received a letter from my father, couched in few words; but these few words were so sad and melancholy, that you must spare my relating them to you, Corinna; it would be too painful to me. My father was already ill; but his pride, and his delicacy, prevented his telling me so. However, his whole letter expressed so much grief, at my absence, and the possibility of my marriage with Madame d'Arbigny, that I do not yet conceive how, in reading it, I did not foresee the misfortune that threatened me. I was, however, sufficiently moved at it no longer to hesitate, and I went to Madame d'Arbigny perfectly determined to take my leave of her. She soon perceived that I had taken a decided resolution, and, employing all her presence of mind, she rose up suddenly, and said to me,—“ Before you go, I must relate to you a secret, which I

ought to blush to avow. In abandoning me, it will not be my life, alone, that you will destroy, the fruit of my shame, of my guilty love, will perish with me.'— Nothing could express the emotion which I felt; this sacred duty, this new tie, took possession of my soul, and I was subjected to the will of Madame d'Arbigny, as her most devoted slave.

“ I would have espoused her immediately, agreeably to her wishes, if great obstacles did not oppose themselves at that time, to an Englishman marrying in France, from his being required to declare his name to the civil officer. I therefore postponed our union till the moment when I could take her with me to England, till when I determined not to leave her. She then became calm; but no sooner was she quite easy upon the subject of our immediate departure, than she soon began to complain, and to

appear alternately wounded and unhappy at my not surmounting every difficulty in order to espouse her. I should certainly have finished by yielding to her will ; I had fallen into the most profound melancholy ; I passed whole days at home, without being able to go out ; an idea preyed upon my mind which I never avowed, but which persecuted me continually. I had a presentiment of my father's illness, which I wished to treat as a weakness. By a strange effect of that terror, which the grief of Madame d'Arbigny caused me, I combatted my duty as a passion, whilst a passion tormented me with the imperious claims of duty. Madame d'Arbigny wrote to me incessantly to come and see her ; I obeyed her summons ; but when in her presence I spoke not of her actual situation ; because I did not like to remind her of that which gave her a control over my

actions ; methinks, at present, that she also spoke less on that subject than might have been expected ; but I then suffered too much to remark any thing.

“ At length, once, after I had remained three days at home, devoured with remorse, writing twenty letters to my father, and then tearing them, M. de Maltigues, who hardly ever visited me, because we did not agree very well in sentiment, came, deputed by Madame d'Arbigny, to abstract me from my solitude ; but taking very little interest as you will soon judge, in the success of his embassy. He perceived on his entrance, before I had time to conceal it, that my face was covered with tears.—‘ To what end is this grief, my dear fellow ?’ said he ; ‘ either leave my cousin, or marry her ; one of those alternatives, I think, must satisfy you ; they are both decisive, and lie within your reach.’—‘ There are situations in life,’ answered I, ‘ where even in

sacrificing ourselves we cannot fulfil all our duties.'—' But you must not sacrifice yourself,' replied M. de Maltigues ; ' I know of no circumstances in life for my part, in which such a sacrifice would be necessary ; a little address will extricate us from them all.—Dexterity is the queen of the world !' —' It is not dexterity that I desire,' said I to him, ' but I could wish, at least, I repeat it to you, in resigning myself to unhappiness, not to afflict the object of my love.'—' Take my advice,' said M. de Maltigues ; ' do not blend with that difficult work which you call living, the sentiment that renders life still more complicated ; it is a malady of the soul ; I am taken with it sometimes, as well as another, but when that happens, I say to myself, it will soon go away, and am seldom disappointed in my expectation.'—' But,' rejoined I, endeavouring to confine myself, like him, to general ideas ; for I neither

could, nor would, treat him as a confidential friend; 'should we be able to conquer love, honour and virtue remain, which often oppose our desires in every respect.'—
'Honour!' replied M. de Maltigues; 'do you understand by honour, fighting when you are insulted? In this regard, certainly honour is imperious; but in any other, let me ask, what interest a man can have in letting himself be led away by a thousand vain scruples?'—'What interest!' interrupted I; 'it does not appear to me, that that word is very well suited to our present subject.'—'To speak seriously,' continued M. de Maltigues, 'I know of no word whose sense is so clear. I know very well, that people said, formerly, *an honourable misfortune, a glorious reverse*. But at the present day, when every body is persecuted, knaves, as well as what are called honest men, the only distinctions in the world are those of birds caught in the net, and those

who have escaped it.'—'I believe in other distinctions,' answered I, 'those of prosperity despised, and calamity honoured by the esteem of good men.'—'Find me, then,' retorted M. de Maltigues, 'those good men who console you in affliction, by their courageous esteem ; methinks, on the contrary, that most people who call themselves virtuous, excuse you if you are prosperous, and love you if you are powerful. It is very noble on your part, without a doubt, to be unable to oppose the will of a father, who ought no longer to trouble his head with your affairs, and to make your life miserable to no purpose : for my part, whatever may happen, it is my chief aim to spare my friends the chagrin of seeing me afflicted, and myself the ungracious aspect of the long visage of consolation.'—'I thought,' interrupted I again, 'that the chief object of life, with an honest man, was not that happiness which might be convenient to

himself; but that virtue which might be serviceable to others.'—'Virtue, virtue,' said M. de Maltigues, hesitating a little; 'that is a language for the vulgar, which the priests cannot talk together without laughing. There are some good souls, which certain words, certain harmonious sounds, can yet move—it is for them, that the instrument is played; but all this poetical stuff, which we call conscience, disinterestedness, and enthusiasm, has been invented to console those who cannot get forward in the world; it is like the *de profundis* which is sung for the dead. The living, when in prosperity, are by no means ambitious of this kind of homage.'

“ I was so irritated at this speech, that I could not help saying, with *hauteur*:—' I should be sorry, Sir, did I possess any authority in the house of Madame d'Arbigny, that she should receive a man who thinks as you do, and is not ashamed to

avow it.'—' You may, in that respect, act as you please, when the time comes,' answered M. de Maltigues, ' but if my cousin takes my advice, she will not espouse a man who makes himself so miserable at the prospect of such an union. I have for a long time, as she can inform you, condemned her weakness, and all the means she takes to obtain an object which is not worth the trouble.'

“ At this word, the accent of which rendered it still more insulting, I made a sign to M. de Maltigues to go out with me. By the way, I must tell you, he continued to explain his system with the greatest sang-froid in the world; and though death might be his lot in a few moments, he uttered not a word that bespoke either religion or sensibility.—' Had I ever given in to the fiddle-faddle nonsense of you young men,' said he, ' do you think that what is passing in my own country must not have

cured me? In what instance have you found your scrupulous manner of any service to you?'—'I agree with you,' said I to him, 'that at present, it is less serviceable in your country, than any where else; but in time, or beyond time every thing has its reward.'—'Yes,' replied M. de Maltigues, 'by bringing heaven into the reckoning.'—'And why should we not?' said I to him; 'one of us will soon know perhaps to what account to place it.'—'Should I fall,' continued he, laughing, 'I am sure I shall know nothing about it; and should it be your lot, I am sure you will not return to inform me on the subject.'

"It struck me by the way, that if I should be killed by M. de Maltigues, I had not taken any precaution to make known my fate to my father; or to convey to Madame d'Arbigny a part of my fortune, to which I thought her entitled. Whilst my mind was occupied by these reflections, we passed

the house of M. de Maltigues, and I asked his permission to enter it, in order to write two letters; he consented, and when we continued our walk to go out of the city, I gave them into his hands, and spoke of Madame d'Arbigny with much interest, recommending her to him, as a certain friend. This proof of confidence affected him; for it must be observed, to the honour of civil courtesy, that men who profess immorality the most openly, are very much flattered, if they receive, by chance, a mark of esteem: the circumstances also, in which we stood, were sufficiently serious for M. de Maltigues to be moved; but on no account in the world would he have anybody observe it; and he said, in pleasantry, what I have reason to believe was inspired by a graver sentiment,

“ ‘ You are an honest creature, my dear Nelville; I will do something generous for you. They say that

generosity leads to happiness, and indeed it is so infantine a quality, that it ought rather to be recompensed in heaven than upon earth. But before I serve you, our conditions must be well understood, though we shall not decline fighting on that account.'

“ I answered these words by a very disdainful consent as I believe ; at least, I thought any precaution in speaking perfectly useless. M. de Maltigues continued in a dry and unconcerned tone,—‘ Madame d’Arbigny does not suit you ; there is no kind of affinity in your characters ; besides, your father would break his heart at such a marriage, and you would break your’s, for having afflicted him : Should I survive, therefore, it would be better for me to espouse Madame d’Arbigny, and should I fall, it would still be better that she should espouse any other rather than you ; for my cousin possesses uncommon prudence, and much as she may be in love, always adopts

some wise precaution against the moment when she may be loved no longer. You will learn all that by her letters, which I leave to you, should it be my lot to die; you will find them in my escrutoire, of which here is the key. I have known my cousin ever since she was born, and you know, that, notwithstanding her reserve, she never conceals any thing from me. However, I do not attach much importance to this, and I think that men should keep no secrets from each other with regard to the women. Should I fall, it will be the fine eyes of Madame d'Arbigny that will have caused my death; and though I am ready to die for her with a good grace, yet I do not feel much obliged to her for the situation to which she has reduced me by her double intrigue. However,' added he, 'it is not quite certain that you will kill me.'—In finishing these, finding we were without the city, he drew

his sword, and placed himself on the defensive.

“ He had spoken with a singular vivacity, and I remained confounded at what he had told me. He seemed to become animated rather than alarmed at the approach of danger, and I could not conceive whether he had betrayed the truth, or forged a falsehood to avenge himself of me. Nevertheless, in this state of uncertainty I respected his life: he was less adroit than I in bodily exercises, and several times I could have plunged my sword into his heart; but I contented myself with wounding him in the sword arm. He appeared sensible of my generous conduct towards him, and I brought to his recollection, as I conducted him home, the conversation which had preceded our duel. He then said to me: ‘ I am sorry at having betrayed the confidence of my cousin.— Danger intoxicates us like wine.--However,

I console myself with the reflection, that you would not be happy with Madame d'Arbigny—she is too cunning for you. With me that is of no consequence. I find her charming, and am extremely pleased with her wit—she will never do anything to my detriment, and we will accommodate each other very well in every thing, because marriage will make a common interest between us. But you, who are of a romantic disposition, would be a dupe to her. It was in your power to take my life; you have spared it; I cannot refuse you the letters which I promised you after my death. Read them, go to England, and do not torment yourself with any regret, on the score of Madame d'Arbigny. She will weep because she loves you; but she will console herself, because she is reasonable enough not to be pleased with a state of unhappiness, particularly not to let it be known to the

world, and in three months she will be Madame de Maltigues.'—All that he told me was true, and the letters he shewed me, fully corroborated it. I was convinced that Madame d'Arbigny was not in the situation she had feigned to own with blushes, in order to force me to espouse her and that in this respect she had unworthily deceived me. That she loved me there could be no doubt, since she owned it to M. de Maltigues in her letters; but she flattered him with so much art, she left him so much to hope, and, in order to appear agreeable in his eyes, shewed a character so different from that she exhibited to me, that I could no longer doubt her intention of espousing him, should the match between her and myself be broken off. Such was the woman, Corinna, who has for ever destroyed my peace of mind.

“ I wrote to her on my departure, and

beheld her no more: but I have learned since, that she has espoused M. de Maltigues as he had predicted. But I was far from anticipating then, the misfortune that awaited me. I thought to obtain pardon of my father, and felt sure, that on my relating to him how I had been deceived, he would love me the more, since I should be more deserving of his pity. I travelled night and day through Germany, and arrived in England at the end of a month, full of confidence in my father's inexhaustible goodness. On landing, Corinna, a public newspaper informed me that my father was no more! Twenty months have passed since that moment, and it is still before me like a phantom. The fire of this volcano is less fearful to me than those words: "*Lord Nelville has just died.*"—— This is not all; I learnt that he died deeply afflicted at my abode in France, fearing that I might renounce my military

career, and espouse a woman of whom he thought little good, and that by settling in a country at war with my own, I might entirely lose my reputation in England. Who knows whether these melancholy thoughts may not have shortened his days! Tell me, Corinna, am I not an assassin?" "No," cried she, "you have been unfortunate, but not guilty;—you have been the victim of your own goodness and generosity. My respect for you is only equalled by my love—judge yourself by my heart, as by your own conscience. Believe her who adores you. Your imagination is led astray by grief. Love, such as I feel, is not an illusion, it is because you are the best, and the most sensible of men, that I admire you."—"Corinna," said Oswald, to her, "this homage is not due to me; but it is possible that I may not be so guilty as I think myself. My father pardoned me before his death. I found

a written paper addressed to me in his dying moments, wherein he makes use of the most affectionate and gentle expressions.—A letter of mine had reached him, which had in some degree justified my conduct; but the blow was irrevocably struck; the wound which I had inflicted had pierced his heart.

“When I entered his castle, when the old servants surrounded me, I repelled their consolations; I accused myself before them, I went to prostrate myself before his tomb, and there swore, as if my conduct could still admit of reparation, that I would never marry without my father’s consent. Alas! of what service was this promise to him who was no more? what signified, then, these delirious expressions? However, I must at least consider them as a solemn engagement to do nothing which he would have disapproved of whilst living. Co-

rinna, my love, why are you troubled at these words? My father might demand of me the sacrifice of a woman practised in dissimulation, who was indebted to her address alone for the passion she inspired me with; but would his celestial spirit require me to forsake her, whose heart is all truth, nature, and generosity; her for whom I have felt the first emotions of love, her who purifies the soul instead of leading it astray?

“ When I entered my father’s room, I saw his cloak, his arm-chair, and his sword. They were there as before; but my father was not there—his place was empty—I invoked his name in vain! This manuscript, this collection of his thoughts, is all that answered me: you are already acquainted with some passages of it,” said Oswald, giving it to Corinna—“ I carry it always about me—Read what he has written on the duty of

children towards their parents—read, Corinna, your sweet voice will perhaps familiarise me with his words.” Corinna obeyed, and read as follows :

“ Ah ! how little it requires to render a father, and a mother, advanced in life, mistrustful of their own parental influence ; they easily believe that their presence is not wanted upon earth. Of what use can they think their life to you who no longer ask their advice. You live entirely for the present moment, you devote yourself entirely to it, by a ruling passion ; and all that does relate to this present moment appears to you antique and superannuated. In fact, you are so absorbed in yourself, both in heart and mind, that believing your own existence to form an historical epoch, the eternal resemblances between times and men escape your attention, and the authority of experience seems to you a fiction, merely

destined to enhance the credit of the aged, and form the last enjoyments of their self love. What an error is yours! The vast theatre of the world does not change its actors—it is always man who appears on the stage; but man only varies his character; he does not become a new being, and as all his forms are dependent upon some principal passion, the circle of which has been long trodden, it rarely happens that in the little combinations of private life, experience—the science of the past—may not be the fertile source of most useful knowledge.

“ Let honor, then, be shewn to fathers and mothers; let them be honored and respected, were it only for their past reign; for that time of which they have been the sole masters, and which will never return, were it only for those years for ever gone by, and of which they bear the sacred stamp imprinted on their foreheads.

“Such is your duty, presumptuous children, who appear so impatient to travel alone the journey of life. You need not doubt, but those parents who are so slow in making room for you, will one day take their leave. That father, whose language is tainted with a severity that offends you; that mother, whose old age imposes on you cares that are thought troublesome: they will leave you—watchful guardians of your infancy, warm protectors of your youth, they will leave you, and you will seek in vain for better friends: they will leave you, and when no more, they will present themselves to you under a new aspect; for Time, which increases the age of persons present to our sight, gives them perpetual youth, when death has taken them from the earth: Time gives them, then, a lustre which was unknown to us. We behold them in the picture of eternity

where there is neither age nor gradation, and should they have left on earth some remembrance of their virtue, we ornament them in imagination with a celestial Aureolus; we follow them with our looks into the abodes of the elect; we contemplate them in these abodes of glory and felicity, and feel ourselves eclipsed by their splendor, even in the midst of that youth and prosperity, which no longer dazzles us." (26)

"Corinna," cried lord Nelville, "do you think that it was against me he vented those eloquent complainings?"

"No, no;" replied Corinna, "you know that he loved you, that he confided in your tenderness, and, I understand from you, that these reflections were written long before you had committed the error with which you now reproach yourself. Let me read to you," continued Corinna, running over the manuscript which she

held in her hand," these reflections on indulgence, which are written some pages farther on.

" We walk in life with a tottering step, and surrounded by snares; our senses are seduced by deceitful baits; our imagination leads us astray by false lights, and even our reason finds, every day, that it wanted some knowledge, some confidence. Are not so many dangers united to so much weakness; so many different interests with so limited a foresight, and so confined a capacity—so much to learn, and so short a life—are not all these circumstances, all these conditions of our nature, intended to shew us what a high rank we should accord to indulgence in the order of social virtues?—Alas! where is the man who is exempt from weakness? Where is the man who has nothing to reproach himself with? Where is the man who can look on the

retrospect of his past life, without a pang of remorse, or a sigh of regret? He alone is a stranger to the agitations of a timorous soul, who has never examined himself, who has never sojourned in the solitude of his conscience." (27)

"These are the words," said Corinna, "that your father addresses to you from the summit of heaven!"

"Thou art in the right," said Oswald to Corinna, "thou art an angel of consolation; but if I had seen him for a moment before his death, if he had known of me that I was not unworthy of him, if he had but told me that he thought so, I should not be racked with remorse, like the most criminal of men! I should not betray that vacillating conduct, that troubled soul, which promises no happiness with me. Do not accuse me with weakness; what can

courage when opposed by conscience? Even now as darkness advances, methinks I see in these clouds, the avenging thunderbolt! Corinna! Corinna! restore confidence to your unhappy lover, or let me lie on this earth, which will, perhaps, open at my call, and let me penetrate to the regions of the dead."

BOOK. XIII.

Vesuvius and the plain of Naples.

CHAP. I.

LORD Nelville remained for a long time insensible, after the cruel recital which had shaken his whole soul. Corinna gently tried to bring him to himself: the river of fire which fell from Vesuvius, and which night at length rendered visible, made a strong impression on the disturbed imagination of Oswald. Corinna profited by this circumstance, to withdraw him from the recollections by which he was agitated, and hurried him along

with her to the ashy border of the burning lava.

The ground which they traversed, before they arrived thither, gave way beneath their feet, and seemed to repulse them from an abode hostile to all that breathes, where nature no longer appears under the controul of man, where she escapes his dominion by death. The fire of the torrent is of a dark colour ; nevertheless, when it burns the vines or the trees, they produce a clear and brilliant flame ; but the lava itself is sombre, as the infernal lake is represented to be ; it slowly flows along, sable by day, and red by night. We hear, as we approach it, a little sparkling noise, which terrifies us the more from its being light and trifling, from cunning seeming to unite with strength ; thus the tiger steals with slow and measured steps upon his prey. The lava creeps along

without hastening or losing a moment; when its passage is opposed by a wall, or an edifice of any kind, it stops, and accumulating its black and bituminous waves, swallows up, in its burning torrent, the obstacle that resisted it. Its progress is not so rapid, that men may not escape it; but, like Time, it reaches the imprudent and the aged, who, seeing it approach, heavily and silently imagine themselves secure. Its light is so ardent, that, for the first time, the earth is reflected in the sky, producing the appearance of a continual lightning: the sky in its turn is reflected in the sea, and nature is inflamed with this triple image of fire.

The wind is heard and seen in whirlwinds of fire from the gulph, whence proceeds the lava. We feel terrified at what passes in the bowels of the earth, which secret storm causes to tremble

beneath our feet. The rocks, which surround the source of the lava, are covered with sulphur and bitumen, whose colours have something infernal in them: a livid green, a yellowish brown, and a gloomy red, form a kind of dissonance in our eyes, and torment the sight in the same manner that the ear would be wounded by the shrill cries of witches, when, by night, they call to the moon to descend upon the earth.

All that surrounds the volcano recalls the idea of hell, and the descriptions of the poets are, doubtless, borrowed from this spot. It is here that we can form an idea of a malevolent power opposing the designs of Providence. In contemplating such an abode, we ask ourselves, whether bounty alone presides over the phenomena of the creation, or whether some hidden principle forces nature, like man, to acts of ferocity. “Corinna,” cried Lord

Nelville, “ is it from these infernal regions that pain proceeds? Does the angel of death take his flight from this summit? Did I not see thy celestial look, I should here lose all recollection of the works of the Deity that adorn the world, and, nevertheless, this infernal aspect, all fearful as it is, to me is less terrible than the remorse that preys upon my heart. Every peril may be braved; but how can he, who is no more, exonerate us from those crimes which we have been guilty of towards him? Never! never! Ah, Corinna, that is a word of iron—a word of fire! The torments which the imagination has invented, the wheel that turns incessantly, the water that flies the lips of him who approaches it, and the stone that rolls down again in proportion as it is raised to a certain height, give but a feeble image of that dreadful thought—IRREPARABLE!”

A profound silence reigned around

Oswald and Corinna; their guides had withdrawn to some distance, and as there was near the crater neither animal, insect, nor plant, nothing was heard there but the roaring of the fire. Nevertheless, the noise of the city reaches this spot; the sound of the bells are heard through the air—perhaps they celebrate a birth—perhaps they announce a death: no matter, they excite a soft emotion in the traveller.—

“Dear Oswald,” said Corinna, “let us quit this desert, let us descend amongst the living; for my soul is sick in this region. Every other mountain seems to raise us above terrestrial life, and lift us towards heaven; but here I feel nothing but terror and alarm: Nature seems to me treated as a criminal, and condemned, like a depraved being, no longer to feel the bountiful breath of the Creator.—This surely cannot be the abode of the good—let us go.”

A heavy rain fell whilst Corinna and Lord Nelville were descending to the plain. Their torches were every instant ready to be extinguished: the Lazzaroni, who accompanied them, uttered continual cries, calculated to strike terror into those who do not know that it is their habitual custom. But these men are sometimes agitated by a superfluity of life which they know not what to do with; because they unite indolence and violence in the same degree. Their physiognomy, more marked than their character, seems to indicate a kind of vivacity in which the heart and mind are not concerned. Oswald, uneasy lest the rain should injure Corinna, and their light be extinguished, was solely occupied with watching over her safety, and this interest, so tender, gradually restored her confidence. They found their carriage at the foot of the mountain; they did not stop at the ruins of Her-

culaneum which are almost buried afresh not to undermine Portici, which is built on this ancient city. They arrived at Naples towards midnight, and Corinna promised Lord Nelville, on taking her leave for the night, that, on the next morning, she would put into his hands the history of her life.

CHAP. II.

IN effect, the next morning, Corinna wished to impose upon herself the promised effort, and though a more intimate acquaintance with the character of Oswald redoubled her disquietude, she quitted her chamber, with her manuscript, trembling, but determined to give it him. She entered the parlour of the inn which they both inhabited, where she found Oswald, who had just received letters from England. One of these letters was on the mantle-piece, and the hand writing so

struck Corinna, that, with inexpressible alarm, she asked from whom it came?—

“From Lady Edgermond,” answered Oswald.—“Do you correspond with her,” interrupted Corinna: “Lord Edgermond was my father’s friend,” continued Oswald; “I will not conceal from you that my father had intended Lucilia Edgermond, his lordship’s daughter, for my wife.”—“Gracious God!” cried Corinna, and she sunk into a chair, almost in a swoon.

“Whence proceeds this cruel emotion?” said Lord Nelville; “what have you to fear from me, Corinna, when I love you to idolatry? Had my father, in dying, commanded me to espouse Lucilia, I certainly should not think myself free, and should fly from your captivating presence; but he only advised this marriage, writing to me at the same time that, Lucilia being as yet an infant, he could not of course form a correct judgment of her. I have

only seen her once myself, when she had attained her twelfth year, and I entered into no engagement with her mother, before my departure for Italy. However, the uncertainty and embarrassment which you may have remarked in my conduct, proceeded solely from this desire of my father : before my knowing you, I wished to accomplish his wishes in this respect, as a kind of expiatory sacrifice to his memory, as a way of prolonging the empire of his will beyond the grave ; but you have triumphed over this intention, and I have now only to seek your pardon for that which may have appeared in your eyes as feebleness and irresolution. We can never, Corinna, entirely recover the effects of a grief, such as I have felt ; it withers hope, it excites a painful sentiment of timidity.—So much injury have I received from the hand of destiny, that I suspect her, even when she offers me the greatest benefit. But these

disquietudes, my love, are dissipated, and I am thine for ever! I say to myself, that had you been known to my father, it is you whom he would have chosen as the partner of my life, it is you——” “Stay!” cried Corinna, melting into tears; “I beseech you do not talk to me thus.”

“Why,” said Nelville, “should you oppose the pleasure I feel, in uniting you, in my mind, with the recollection of my father, and thus blending in my heart, all that heart holds dear and sacred?”—“You cannot,” interrupted Corinna; “I know too well, you cannot!”—“Just Heaven!” exclaimed Nelville, “what am I then to learn? Give me this manuscript, which contains the history of your life; give it to me.”—“You shall see it,” said Corinna, “but I intreat you to indulge me with eight days longer; only eight days. What I have heard this morning, imposes upon me the necessity of entering into some

further details.”—“How!” said Oswald, what connection is there?”—“Do not exact an explanation of me at present;” interrupted Corinna, “you will soon know all, and that knowledge will perhaps be the terrible boundary of my happiness; but before that moment arrives, I wish that we should see, together, the happy plain of Naples, while that gentle sentiment that unites us, is still alive, whilst our soul is still accessible to those emotions, which the beautiful scenery of nature excite. I wish, in a manner, to consecrate in those abodes, the most solemn epoch of my life. You must preserve a last recollection of me, such as I was, such as I should ever have been, could my heart have resisted the love it feels for you.”—“Ah, Corinna!” said Oswald, “what am I to understand by these words? You certainly have nothing to tell me that can cool my tenderness, and my admiration. Why

then prolong, for eight days, this anxiety, this mystery, which seems to raise a barrier betwixt us?"—"My dear Oswald, it is my wish," answered Corinna; "pardon me this last act of my power; soon it will be only you who will decide betwixt us.—I shall await the decision of my fate, from your mouth, without murmuring, should it be cruel; for I have upon this earth, no sentiment, no tie which condemns me to survive your love." In finishing these words, she quitted the room, gently repelling, with her hand, Oswald, who wished to follow her.

CHAP. III.

CORINNA had determined to give a fête to Oswald, during the eight days of delay, which she had requested of him ; and this idea was united with the most melancholy sentiments. After the knowledge she had obtained of Oswald's disposition, it was impossible for her not to be uneasy at the impression which he must receive from her narration. It was necessary to judge Corinna as a poet, and an artist, to excuse the sacrifice she had made of her rank, her family, and her country, to the enthusiasm

of talent, and the fine arts. Doubtless Lord Nelville possessed all the mind necessary to the admiration of imagination and genius; but he thought the relations of social life ought to take place of everything else, and that the original destination of women, and even men, was not the exercise of the intellectual faculties; but the fulfilment of the private duties of each. The cruel remorse he had felt from having departed from that line of conduct which he traced for himself, had strengthened those severe principles of morality which were innate in him. The manners of England, the customs and opinions of a country, where men feel themselves so happy in a scrupulous regard to duty, as well as to love, confined him, in many respects, within narrow limits: in effect, that lowness of spirits which proceeds from profound affliction, makes us love what is in the natural order of things,

that which goes on of itself, and requires no new resolution, no decision contrary to the circumstances which are marked out for us by fate.

Oswald's love, for Corinna, had modified his whole manner of thinking; but love never entirely effaces the character; and Corinna could read this character through the passion that triumphed over it, and perhaps the interest which Lord Nelville excited, depended greatly upon this conflict between his natural disposition and his love; an opposition which gave an additional value to every proof of his tenderness. But the moment approached, when the fugitive uneasiness, which Corinna had constantly removed, and which had only mingled a light and pensive anxiety with the felicity she enjoyed, was to decide the fate of her life. Her soul, framed for happiness, and accustomed to the ecstasies of genius and poetry, was astonished at the bitter-

ness and uniformity of grief, and a kind of shuddering, which women long resigned to suffering do not feel, now agitated her whole soul.

However, in the midst of the most cruel anxiety, she made secret preparations for at least one brilliant day more, which she desired to pass with Oswald. Her imagination, and her sensibility, were united in a romantic manner. She invited the English who were at Naples, with some Neapolitan ladies and gentlemen, whose society she was pleased with, and, on the morning of that day which she had chosen for the *fête*, and which was the eve of that when she was to make an avowal which might destroy her happiness for ever, a singular trouble animated her features, giving them quite a new expression. A vacant eye might have mistaken this lively expression for joy; but her agitated and rapid movements, and her unsettled looks, proved

too well to Lord Nelville, what was passing in her soul. In vain did he try to calm her by the most tender protestations.—

“ You will talk to me thus two days hence,” said she to him, “ should you continue in your present disposition, but now your softest expressions are painful to me,”—and she left him.

The carriages which were to conduct the company that Corinna had invited, arrived at the close of day, at the moment when the sea-breeze arises, and, refreshing the air, permits man to contemplate nature. The first station of their promenade was at the tomb of Virgil. Corinna and her company stopped there before they traversed the grotto of Pausilippo. This tomb is placed on the finest scite in the world ; the gulph of Naples, is its perspective. There is so much repose and magnificence in the scene, that one is tempted to believe, that Virgil himself has chosen it ; this simple

verse of the Georgics might serve for his epitaph.

Illo Virgilium me tempore dulcis alebat

Parthenope. - - - - -

His ashes still repose in this spot; and the memory of his name, attracts to it the homage of the universe. It is the only earthly blessing that man can snatch from the grasp of death.

Petrarch planted a laurel on this grave; Petrarch is no more, and the laurel is decayed: Numbers of strangers, who have come hither, to honor the memory of Virgil, have written their names upon the walls which surround the urn; and the imagination is offended by those obscure names, whose intrusion disturbs the peaceful idea of solitude, which this abode gives birth to. Petrarch alone was worthy of leaving a durable

trace of his journey to the tomb of Virgil. We descend in silence, from this funeral asylum of glory, and we recal the thoughts and the images which the poet's genius has consecrated for ever. Admirable communion with future generations; a communion which the art of writing perpetuates and renews! Darkness of the grave what art thou then? The ideas, the sentiments, the expression of a man exists; and, shall he himself exist no more? No; such a contradiction in nature is impossible.

“Oswald,” said Corinna to Lord Neville, “the impressions which you have just felt are a bad preparation for a *fête*; but,” added she, with a sort of elevation in her look, “how many festivals have taken place, at a short distance from the tomb?”—“My love,” answered Oswald, “whence this secret pain that agitates you? Confide in me—I owe you six

of the most happy months of my life; perhaps also I may, during that time, have rendered your days more pleasant. Ah! who could rebel against felicity? Who could spurn the supreme enjoyment of conveying peace to a soul like thine? Alas! it is a great deal to feel necessary to the happiness of the humblest mortal; but to be necessary to that of Corinna, is too high an honor, too exquisite a delight, believe me, for man to renounce.”—“I put faith in your promises,” answered Corinna; “but are there not moments when something strange and violent seizes upon the heart, and increases its throbs with a painful violence?”

They traversed the grotto of Pausilippo, with torches which are used also at noon-day, for the grotto is dug through a mountain, and is a quarter of a league in length; so that when in the middle, daylight is hardly perceptible at either extre-

mity. An extraordinary reverberation of sound is heard beneath this long vault; the steps of the horses, and the cries of their conductors, form deafening sounds that render the mind incapable of any connected train of thought. The horses of Corinna, dragged her carriage with an astonishing rapidity; nevertheless, she was not satisfied with their swiftness, and said to Lord Nelville, my dear Oswald how slowly they advance! urge them on faster.” “Whence proceeds this impatience, Corinna?” answered Oswald; “formerly, when together, you did not seek to accelerate the hours we enjoyed.”——“Now,” said Corinna, “that all must be decided, I feel the necessity of hastening every thing, should it be even the day of my death.”

On coming out of the grotto, we feel a lively sensation of pleasure in being restored to day light, and to nature;—in what a garb does nature appear! What are often

missed in Italian scenery, trees, are found here in abundance. Besides, the earth is here covered with those forests which, in other countries, form the chief beauty of nature. The heat is so intense at Naples, that it is impossible to walk even in the shade, during day; but in the evening this open country, surrounded by sea and sky, offers itself entirely to the view, and its freshness is felt in every part. The transparency of the air, the varieties of perspective, and the picturesque forms of the mountains, characterise so well the aspect of the kingdom of Naples, that painters give a preference to its landscapes. Nature has in this country a power, and an originality, which cannot be explained by any of the charms we seek elsewhere.

“ I will conduct you,” said Corinna, to those who accompanied her, “ to the banks of the Lake Avernus, near Phlegeton; and, see there before you is the Temple of the Sybil

of Cumæa. We will traverse those regions celebrated by the name of the delights of Baiæ; but I do not propose that we should stop there now, we will call together the recollections of history and poetry, which here surround us, when arrived at a spot whence we can behold them all at once."

It was in Cape Misena, that Corinna had prepared the music and dancing. Nothing could be more picturesque than this *fête*; all the sailors of Baiæ were clad in lively colours, that formed an agreeable contrast with each other; some eastern mariners, from a Levantine vessel then in the port, danced with the peasants of the neighbouring islands of Ischia and Procida, whose dress preserved an affinity with the Greek costume; their voices formed an agreeable concord, in the distance, and the sounds of the instruments, answering each other in delightful echoes from among the rocks, seemed to lose themselves in the sea.

The air they breathed was delightful; it penetrated the soul with a sentiment of joy, which animated every one present, and even distended the heart of Corinna. She was intreated to join in the dance with the country girls, to which she immediately consented with pleasure; but hardly had she begun, when, seized with the most gloomy sentiments, the amusements of which she partook appeared odious to her, and hurrying from the festive scene, she went to seat herself at the extremity of the Cape that overlooks the sea. Oswald followed her thither; but found her surrounded by the company of visitors, who earnestly intreated Corinna to deliver an *improvisatore* on this charming spot. Such were her internal feelings, that she let them conduct her to the rising ground, where they had placed her lyre, without reflecting on what was expected of her.

CHAP. IV.

CORINNA, however, wished Oswald to hear her once more, as he had heard her at the Capitol, in the splendour of that talent with which heaven had endowed her. Should this talent be lost for ever to herself and the world, she wished its last setting rays to shine upon him she loved. This desire caused even the agitation she felt to produce the necessary inspiration. Her lyre was ready, and all her friends were impatient for her to begin. Even

the people who had heard of her reputation, this southern people whose imagination renders them good judges of poetry, surrounded in silence the enclosure where the friends of Corinna were placed, and all these Neapolitan countenances expressed, by their lively physiognomy, the most animated attention. The moon arose in the horizon; but the last beams of day rendered her light very pale. From the top of the little hill, which stretches into the sea, and forms Cape Misena, was clearly seen Vesuvius, the Bay of Naples, the islands with which it is strewn, and the plain which extends from the city as far Gaeta; in fact, that country was perceived, where, of all others in the world, Volcanoes, history, and poetry, have left the most traces. Therefore, with one accord, all the friends of Corinna proposed, as the subject of her effusion, *The recollections which those regions retraced.* She tuned

her lyre, and began with a faltering voice: her aspect was beautiful; but one that knew her as Oswald did, might discover in her countenance the anxiety of her soul; she endeavoured, however, to contain her pain, and rise, at least for a moment, above her personal situation.

*The extempore effusion of Corinna on the
Plain of Naples.*

“ Poetry, Nature, and History, here contend for greatness—here we may embrace, with a single glance, all the prodigies of past times.

“ I perceive the Lake Avernus, an extinguished volcano, whose waves once inspired terror. Acheron and Phlegeton, which a subterraneous fire causes to boil, are the billows of that hell which was visited by Æneas.

“ Fire, that devouring principle of life, which can create a world or consume it, was the more terrible the more its laws were unknown. Formerly, Nature only revealed its secrets to the eye of poetry.

“ The city of Cumæa, the grotto of the Sybil, and the Temple of Apollo, were upon this height.—Behold the wood where the golden branch was gathered! The land of the *Æneid* surrounds you, and those fictions which genius has consecrated, are become recollections of which we yet seek the traces.

“ A triton plunged into these waves the rash Trojan who dared to defy the deities of the sea with his songs; these hollow and sonorous rocks, are such as Virgil has described them. Imagination is faithful when it is all-powerful. The human genius is creative when it copies Nature, and imitative when it aims to invent.

“ In the midst of these terrible masses, ancient witnesses of the creation, we behold a new mountain which the volcano has given birth to.—Here the earth is stormy like the sea, and is not content to be restrained within its limits. The ponderous element roused to rebellion by the roaring of the abyss, digs out vallies, raises mountains, and its petrified waves bear witness to the tempests that tear its bosom.

“ If you strike upon this hill, the vault beneath resounds.—One would say that the habitable world is no more than a surface, ready to yawn wide. The plain of Naples is the image of human passions; sulphureous and fertile; its dangers and its pleasures seem born of these fiery volcanoes, which give the air so many charms, and cause the thunderbolt to growl beneath our feet.

“ Pliny studied nature that he might

the better learn how to admire Italy, and he boasted of his own country as the finest of all others, when he could give it no other more honourable title.— Seeking science, as a warrior seeks conquest, he quitted this very promontory to observe Vesuvius through the flames, and those flames consumed him.

“ Oh, memory! noble power! thy empire is in this spot! From age to age, whimsical destiny, man complains of what he has lost! One would say, that the ages gone by have been all depositaries, in their turn, of a happiness which is now no more; and, whilst thought, proud of its attainments, darts into the future, our soul seems to regret an ancient country to which it is endeared by the past.

“ Did not the Romans, whose splendour we covet, envy the manly simplicity of their ancestors? Formerly,

they despised this voluptuous country, and its pleasures subdued only their enemies. Behold Caprea, in the distance, that overcame the warrior who withstood Rome longer than the universe.

“ The Romans, in their turn, inhabited these parts: when energy of mind served only to give additional poignancy to grief and shame, they became effeminate without remorse.— At Baiæ, they have been seen to pillage the sea coast, and hew asunder the mountains to build palaces, and the masters of the world, reduced to slavery, wished to console themselves by subjugating nature.

“ Cicero lost his life near the promontory of Gaeta, which offers itself to our looks. The Triumvirs, without respect for posterity, robbed them of the thoughts which that great man

would have conceived.—The crime of the Triumvirs still exists: we feel the effects of their guilt.

“ Cicero fell beneath the poniard of tyrants. Scipio, still more wretched, was banished by his country whilst it was yet free.—He ended his days not far from this shore, and the ruins of his tomb are called the *Tower of our native land*: affecting allusion to the recollections with which his great soul was occupied!

“ Marius took refuge in the marshes of Minturnæ, near the abode of Scipio. Thus, in all ages, nations have persecuted their great men; but they have been consoled by deification; and that sky, which the Romans believed subjected to them, has received, among its stars, Romulus, Numa, and Cæsar; new stars, which confound in our

sight, the rays of celestial light and glory.

“ But calamity is not enough—the trace of every crime is here. Behold, at the extremity of the Bay, the island of Caprea, where old age disarmed Tiberius ; where that soul, at once cruel and voluptuous, violent and wearied with guilt, plunged in the most grovelling pleasures, as if tyranny had not sufficiently degraded him.

“ The tomb of Agrippina is on these shores opposite to the island of Caprea ; it was not raised till after the death of Nero : the assassin of his mother proscribed even her ashes. He lived a long time at Baia, surrounded by the recollections of his crime. What monsters does chance collect beneath our eyes ! Tiberius and Nero behold each other face to face !

“ The islands which the volcanoes

have caused to spring out of the sea, were subservient, almost at their birth, to the crimes of the old world; the unhappy exiles, on those solitary rocks, in the midst of the waves, contemplated their native country at a distance; till sometimes, after a long banishment, a sentence of death informed them that they were not forgotten by their enemies.

“O, land! bathed as thou hast been with tears, and with blood, thou hast never ceased to produce fruit and flowers! Art thou then without pity for man? Art thou never moved when his dust returns to thy maternal bosom?”

Here Corinna rested for some moments. All present threw at her feet branches of myrtle, and of laurel. The soft lustre of the morn shone upon her face: the fresh breeze of the sea agitated her hair, and nature seemed to take pleasure in giving

her a picturesque appearance. Corinna, however, was suddenly affected: she contemplated these enchanting scenes, heightened by the sweetness of the evening. She beheld Oswald, who, perhaps, would not be with her always, and the tears flowed from her eyes. Even the people who had just applauded her with such noisy transports, respected her emotions, and all waited in silence till her words should make them participate in what she felt. She drew some prelusive strains from her lyre; then, no longer dividing her song into octaves, she yielded to an uninterrupted inspiration.

“ Some recollections of the heart, some female names also claim our tears. It is at Misena, in this very spot, that Cornelia, the widow of Pompey, preserved her mourning weeds till her death. On those shores, Agrippina long wept Germanicus, till one day, the same assassin who had

robbed her of her husband, thought her worthy to follow him. The island of Nisida witnessed the farewell of Brutus and of Portia.

“ Thus the women who were beloved by the heroes, have seen the objects of their adoration perish. In vain did they long to follow their footsteps, they were at length obliged to part. Portia fell by her own hand; Cornelia pressed to her bosom the sacred urn, which no longer answered to her cries; Agrippina, during several years, vainly sought to irritate the murderer of her spouse. These unfortunate creatures wandered like departed spirits on the shores, washed by the eternal river, sighing to reach the opposite land. In their dreary solitude they interrogated silence—they asked of all nature, of the starry sky, as well as the deep ocean, for that beloved voice they were to hear no more.

“ Love, supreme power of the heart,

mysterious enthusiasm, which combines in itself poetry, heroism, and religion! What will become of us when separated by destiny from him who possessed the secret of our heart, him in whom we lived, who gave to our life a celestial charm? What will be the lot of a woman, when absence or death renders her isolated upon the earth? She languishes and dies. How many times have those rocks which surround us offered their cold support to these solitary widows, who once leant upon the bosom of a friend, upon the arm of a hero?

“ Before you is Sorrento; there dwelt the sister of Tasso, when he came as a pilgrim, to ask of this obscure friend an asylum against the injustice of princes; his long sufferings had almost bereft him of reason: celestial things alone were known to him; every earthly object disturbed his mind. Thus genius, terrified at

the desert that surrounds it, traverses the world without finding anything that resembles itself. Nature no longer echoes to its thoughts, and the vulgar take for madness that indisposition of the soul, which no longer breathes, in this world, sufficient air, sufficient enthusiasm, sufficient hope.

“Does not a fatality,” continued Corinna, with a still increasing emotion, “pursue those exalted minds, those poets, whose imagination renders them exquisitely susceptible of love and of pain? They are exiled from another region, and universal goodness ought not to ordain every thing for the small number of the elect, or of the proscribed. What did the ancients mean when they spoke of destiny with so much terror? What can destiny effect upon vulgar and tranquil beings? They follow the seasons, they tractably go through the habitual course of life. But the priestess, who delivered the oracles of

heaven, felt herself agitated by a cruel power. Whence the involuntary force that precipitates genius into misfortune; it hears the noise of the spheres, which mortal organs cannot seize; it penetrates the mysteries of sentiment, unknown to other men, and its soul conceals a God which it cannot contain.

“ Sublime author of nature, protect us! Our energies are without effect, our hopes deceitful. The passions exercise a boisterous tyranny over us, which leaves us neither liberty nor repose. Perhaps what we shall do to-morrow will decide our fate; perhaps yesterday we said a word that nothing can ever redeem! When our soul is lifted to the highest thoughts, we feel, as on the summit of a lofty edifice, a dizziness which confounds every object in our sight; but, even then, grief is not lost in the clouds, it furrows, it breaks through them. O, God! what tidings does it

bear.”—At these words, a deadly pale covered the face of Corinna; her eyes were closed, and she would have fallen to the ground if Lord Nelville had not, at that moment, darted forward and caught her in his arms.

CHAP. V.

CORINNA came to herself, and at the sight of Lord Nelville, whose look bore a moving expression of interest and disquietude, she became more calm. The Neapolitans remarked, with astonishment, the gloomy character of Corinna's poetry; they admired the harmonious beauty of her verses, but they could have wished that a disposition of soul less melancholy had inspired them; for they only considered the fine arts, and poetry, among them, as a mode of

diverting the attention from the miseries of life, and not of searching more deeply its painful secrets.

But the English, who heard Corinna, were penetrated with admiration. They were delighted to hear melancholy sentiment expressed by an Italian imagination. The beautiful Corinna, whose animated features, and look full of fire, were destined to paint happiness, that daughter of the sun, struck with secret pain, resembled those brilliant flowers, who still in their bloom betray a black spot, caused by some mortal puncture, which menaces approaching decay.

All the company embarked, in order to return to Naples ; and the heat and calm, which then reigned, gave a lively relish to the pleasures of the marine excursion. Goëthe has painted, in a delicious romance, the fondness we feel for water in the midst of heat. The river Nymph boasts

to the fisherman the charm of her waves: she invites him to taste their refreshing power, till seduced by degrees he plunges into the tide. This magic power of water, resembles in some manner that of the serpent's look, which attracts, whilst it strikes with terror. The wave which swells at a distance, grows bigger by degrees, and hastening as it approaches the shore, seems to correspond with a secret desire of the heart which, from a gentle beginning, becomes irresistible.

Corinna was more calm; the charms of the weather composed her soul: she had turned up her hair, in order that she might feel the breeze the better; and her figure then looked more beautiful than ever. The wind instruments which followed in another boat, produced an enchanting effect; they were in harmony with the sea, with the stars, and with the intoxicating sweetness of an Italian evening; but they produced

a still more affecting emotion ; they were the voice of Heaven in the midst of Nature.—“ My dear love,” said Oswald, in a low voice, “ delight of my soul ! I shall never forget this day : Can a happier ever exist ? ” In pronouncing these words, his eyes were filled with tears. One of the seductive attractions of Oswald was, that emotion at once natural and suppressed which often, in spite of himself, filled his eyes with tears : his look had then an irresistible expression. Sometimes even, in the midst of pleasantry, one might perceive that he was secretly affected with something, and his emotion, blended with his gaiety, gave him a noble charm.—“ Alas ! ” answered Corinna, “ I expect no more a day like unto this ; let it at least be blessed as the last of my life, if it may not be the dawning of a permanent happiness.”

CHAP. VI.

THE weather began to change when they arrived at Naples ; the sky was darkened, and the storm, which was announced in the air, already agitated the waves, as if the tempest of the sea answered to the storm of Heaven. Oswald had gone before Corinna some steps, because he wished to procure torches to conduct her more safely to her abode. In passing the quay, he saw a number of the Lazzaroni collected together, who cried out pretty loudly : “ *Ah ! poor*

man, he cannot save himself; he may as well have patience, for he will surely be drowned!" —“What do you say?” cried Lord Nelville with impetuosity; “of whom do you speak?” “*Of a poor old man,*” answered they, “*who was bathing there below, not far from the mole; but who has been overtaken by the storm, and has not strength sufficient to struggle with the waves, and reach the shore.*” The first idea of Oswald was to throw himself into the water; but reflecting on the fright which it would cause Corinna, when she should approach, he offered all the money he had about him, and promised twice as much to him who would plunge in and bring out the old man. The Lazzaroni refused, saying: “*It is too dangerous; it wont do.*” At this moment the old man disappeared beneath the waves. Oswald no longer hesitated, but jumped into the sea, in spite of the billows which covered his head. He buffeted them, however, success-

fully, reached the old man, who, an instant later, would have perished, seized him and brought him ashore. But Oswald suffered so much from the coldness of the water, and the violent efforts he made against the agitated sea, that at the moment he reached land with his prize, he fell breathless, and was believed by those around him to be without life. (28)

Corinna was then passing, without any suspicion of what had happened. She perceived a great crowd collected together, and heard them cry out, "*he is dead.*" Yielding to the terror which these words inspired, she was about to hurry away, when she saw an English gentleman, who accompanied them, penetrate the crowd with precipitation. She took some steps to follow him, when the first object that struck her sight, was the coat of Oswald, which he had left on the shore, in throwing himself into the water. She seized this coat with con-

vulsive despair, thinking that was all that remained of Oswald; and when at length she perceived him himself, though apparently lifeless, she threw herself upon his inanimate body, with a sort of transport, and pressing him ardently in her arms, she had the inexpressible pleasure to feel the throbs of Oswald's heart, which warmed perhaps at the approach of Corinna.—“*He lives,—*” cried she—“*he lives!*—At this moment she resumed a strength, a courage which was scarcely felt by any of Oswald's friends. She called for every assistance, and she herself applied all the means of recovery. She supported Oswald's head; she covered his face with her tears; but, notwithstanding her cruel agitation, she lost not a moment, nor were her cares in the smallest degree interrupted by her grief. Oswald appeared something better. He had not yet however recovered the use of his senses; she therefore caused him to be carried

home. She knelt down by his side, applied every thing that could revive him, and called upon his name with an accent so tender, so passionate, that her voice alone must have recalled him to life.—Oswald heard it, opened his eyes, and squeezed her hand.

Can it be, that to enjoy such a moment we must suffer the torments of hell? Poor mortals! we only know infinity through pain, and in all the enjoyments of life, there is nothing that can compensate the despair of seeing the object of our love expire.

“Cruel man!” cried Corinna—“cruel man, what have you done?”—“Pardon me,” answered Oswald, in a trembling voice; “pardon me. The moment I was about to perish, believe me, my love, I feared for you.”—Admirable expression of love, at the moment, for mutual confidence! Corinna, deeply moved at these

words, could not recal them, even to her last hour, without that kind of tenderness, which, for a moment at least, made r pardon every thing.

CHAP. VII.

THE next thing Oswald thought of was, to put his hand upon his breast for the portrait of his father ; it was still there ; but the water had so effaced it, that the features were hardly to be discovered. Oswald, bitterly afflicted at this loss, cried—“ O, my God ! You have then even taken from me his image ! ” Corinna besought Lord Nelville to permit her to restore this portrait : he consented, but without much hope. What was his astonishment, when, at the end of three days,

she returned it to him, not only repaired, but a more striking likeness than before.—

“ Yes,” said Oswald, in rapture, “ yes you have conceived his features, and his physiognomy. You have been consigned to me by the agency of heaven, as the companion of my fate, since it has revealed to you the remembrance of him who must ever dispose of me. Corinna,” continued he, throwing himself at her feet, “ be for ever the mistress of my life. There is the ring that my father gave my mother; the most sacred pledge that ever was given by the noblest affection to the most faithful heart.—I take it from my finger to put it on thine.—As long as you preserve this, my love, I am no longer free: I form this engagement before I know who you are; it is your soul that I believe in—it is that which has informed me all. The events of your life, if they proceed from you, must be as

noble as your character; if they proceed from fate, and you have been the victim, I thank heaven for having commissioned me to repair the evils of destiny.—Therefore, Corinna, inform me of your secrets, you owe it to him whose promises have preceded your confidence.”

“Oswald,” answered Corinna, “this emotion, so affecting, is born in you of error, and I must dissipate it: you think, that by an inspiration of the heart, I have traced the features of your father; but I must inform you, that I have seen him several times.”—“You have seen my father?” cried Lord Nelville; “and how? In what place have you seen him? Oh, heavens! who then are you?”—“There is your ring,” said Corinna, with a stifled emotion; “I ought already to return it.” “No,” replied Oswald, “I swear that I will never be the husband of another as long as you retain that ring. But pardon

the trouble you have just excited in my soul—I am filled with confused ideas—my disquietude is painful.”—“ I see it,” replied Corinna, “ and I am about to abridge it. But already your voice is no longer the same, and your words are altered. Perhaps, after having read my history, perhaps after the horrible word—adieu—” “ Adieu?” cried Lord Nelville; “ my love, it is only on the bed of death, that I could utter it: till then, dread it not.” Corinna went out, and a few minutes after, Theresa entered Oswald’s room, and put into his hands, by desire of her mistress, the manuscript, containing the following recital.

END OF VOL. III.

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the trouble you have just excited in my
 soul—I am filled with confused ideas—my
 thoughts are painful.—“I see it,” re-
 sponded I, “and I am about to
 renounce it. But already your words are at
 least forcing me to have tried my
 former position after the horrible mani-
 festation of the Lord’s will.”
 “and now,” said I, “it is only on the bed of death
 that I could utter all this, and I
 can no longer write out and a few
 lines after I have returned Obedience
 to my God, and to the world of men.
 The following is the substance of my
 feelings.”

Yours truly,
 J. W. W.

Staël

Corinna or, Italy in five volumes

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